Commentary

VOLUME ONE HUNDRED • NUMBER TWO • AUGUST 1995

In the Matter of Pat Robertson
Norman Podhoretz

A Ladies' Room of One's Own
Wendy Shalit

Where Is the Peace Process Going?
Dore Gold

Arguing for Free Trade
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The Third Mrs. Kessler—A Story
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Two Cheers for Kurt Masur
Terry Teachout

IQ, Race, and Heredity
Charles Murray & Critics

Books in Review: Jeffrey Marsh / Walter A. McDougall / David Singer / J. Bottum / Arch Puddington

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Commentary®

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Community Relations

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Jack Wertheimer ["A Jewish Contract With America," May] is distressed by the continuing commitment of Jewish communal agencies to the separation of church and state. He argues that that commitment is likely to increase the level of tension between Jews and other Americans.

The American Jewish Committee is committed to preserving the separation of church and state precisely because it believes that the involvement of the state in matters of religion is likely to be a potent source of irreconcilable conflict, particularly in a multireligious democracy in which religion is taken seriously. This view is neither novel nor peculiar to Jewish communal organizations. It emerged from the long and bloody wars of religion that convulsed Europe in the 16th and 17th centuries and profoundly influenced the authors of our Bill of Rights.

Jewish opposition to amendment of the Bill of Rights and Jewish support for Supreme Court decisions interpreting it may, of course, provoke hostility. Given the substantial number of Christians and atheists who share these separationist views, it is hard to see why the expression of them should elicit any particular animus toward Jews—except among bigots, and bigots, of course, do not need reasons. Be that as it may, whatever ill-will may be engendered by Jewish support for the principles expressed in the Supreme Court's school-prayer decisions, it is much safer to support those principles than to abandon them.

Consider the conflicts that would be generated if the details of prayer and other displays of religious piety were to become the subject of controversy and debate in thousands of school-board elections across the country. Those conflicts—between Gentile and Gentile, Gentile and Jew, and, indeed, Jew and Jew—would plainly have the capacity to produce very dangerous levels of tension, antagonism, and bitterness.

Nor is it to be supposed that, were the wall of separation dismantled, the prayers to be proffered in public schools would be inoffensive, irenic, and bland. Surely George Santayana was right when he said that "the attempt to speak without speaking any particular language is not more hopeless than the attempt to have a religion that is no religion in particular." Those who believe it is imperative that their children pray in public school are also likely to think that it is imperative that their children pray in the words and images that their respective faiths deem sacred. Indeed, those who are now distressed by the desacralization of the public-school classroom will, justifiably, be more distressed by any attempt to desacralize prayer.

Mr. Wertheimer suggests that separationism reinforces secularism within the Jewish community. It is hard to see why this should be so. Tocqueville and other astute observers of the American scene thought that strict separation of church and state served to enhance the sway of religion in America. Whether or not that analysis is correct, the Jewish community cannot rely on the state to promote Jewish piety among our children. It is not reasonable to expect that the prayers to be uttered in public schools will be drawn from the *siddur*, the Hebrew prayer book, and it is not evident what is to be gained from an intense exposure of Jewish children to the Book of Common Prayer.

Mr. Wertheimer is concerned that Jewish communal organizations are taking positions "out of sync with the mood of the country." Only time will tell whether he has correctly assessed the mood of the country. Of course, he is surely right in suggesting that care should be taken to avoid giving needless offense to our neighbors and to treat them with the respect with which we wish to be treated. But there is no disrespect involved and no legitimate grounds for offense in the position that all religions should be protected from political intrusion. And being out of sync with the national mood is not something that has heretofore deterred COMMENTARY from engaging in stalwart advocacy. Nor should it. One can hope to influence the mood.

Jews have fully enjoyed the special blessings that American free-

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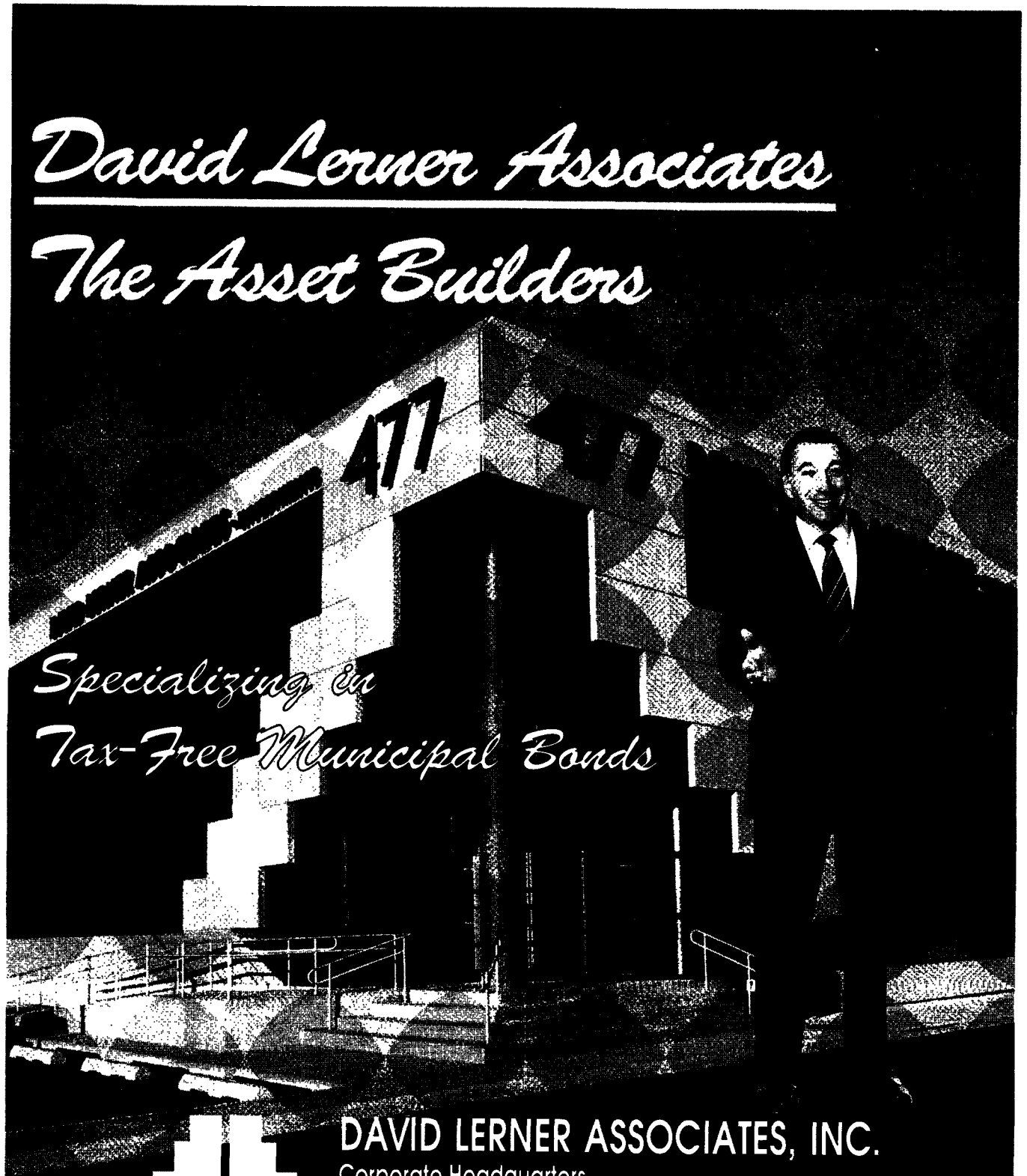

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dom has conferred upon us. Is it not appropriate to feel some obligation to be active in the ranks of those who are vigilant in defense of those freedoms—even if doing so takes a little fortitude?

ROBERT S. RIFKIND
President, American Jewish Committee
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In his zeal to suggest that Jewish public-affairs organizations are "out of sync with the mood of the country," Jack Wertheimer would have the community-relations field abandon Jewish self-interest in favor of gaining political standing with conservatives—exactly what he condemns the field for having done in the past with regard to liberals.

I can assure him that the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council (NJCRAC) and its network of 13 national and 117 local member agencies are no more likely to do the former than we are guilty of having done the latter. The community-relations field will continue to be guided by its dual mission, namely, to safeguard the rights of Jews here and around the world even as we strive to enhance American democratic pluralism.

Although Mr. Wertheimer would have your readers believe otherwise, there is ample evidence to show that the issues and positions articulated by the community-relations field are representative not merely of "social activists," as he grudgingly acknowledges, but of affiliated Jews across the country. A 1995 poll of San Francisco Federation contributors (by definition, "affiliated Jews") is illustrative. Over 80 percent of the respondents believe that Jewish agencies, *as Jewish agencies*, should be involved in such issues as reducing poverty in America, assisting the homeless, improving public education, fighting discrimination against African-Americans, addressing U.S. immigration policy, supporting international human rights, and making coalitions with other ethnic and religious groups.

Consistent with other national polls, the San Francisco survey, undertaken by the local Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC) finds that nearly half of all respondents consider a "commitment to social justice" as the "quality most important to [one's] Jewish identity," exceeding both "religious observance" and "support for Israel" by nearly fourfold.

These data confute the notion that affiliated Jews are uninterested in either the issues or the positions of the community-relations field. It is hard to reach any other conclusion but that the Joint Program Plan, the NJCRAC's annual analysis of the Jewish public-affairs agenda, is representative of the thinking of the overwhelming majority of American Jews who maintain some connection with the organized Jewish community.

One can argue whether a communal identification rooted in social activism is sufficient to maintain a vibrant American Jewry. That is a separate, albeit extremely important, line of inquiry. What is central here, however, is to acknowledge that many Jews find in the social-justice agenda some validation of their Jewishness. An obligation of the community-relations field, therefore, is to provide Jewish structures and vehicles to nurture that impulse. In so doing, the field provides an invaluable service both to the political agenda and also to the communal self-interest of the organized Jewish community.

NJCRAC is not apologetic, either, about the contribution of the community-relations field to the so-called "continuity" agenda. There is no "presumptuousness" in suggesting, as the Joint Program Plan does, that

> the way the field looks at public-policy issues is informed by a Jewish tradition, a Jewish vision, and a Jewish language of social concern that does not foreordain a policy position but establishes a communal universe of discourse that is central to the priority of Jewish continuity.

Even as we reaffirm the goal of preserving a vibrant Jewish community in America, we embrace coalition-building as a central tool for our activities. Jewish experience in America has shown that the best way for a minority—including the Jewish minority—to achieve its goals is by making common cause with others. The coalitional strategy has yielded many successes. The MetroWest, New Jersey JCRC administers a grant on behalf of fifteen interfaith and ethnic-advocacy groups to educate new Americans about their legal rights. In West Palm Beach, the JCRC is working with the NAACP to implement school curricula on both the Holocaust and the African-American experience. The Black-Jewish Leadership Coalition in Philadelphia denounced hate speech when Nation of Islam spokesman Khalid Muhammed visited the city. In Boston, a similar statement was issued by African-American ministers. . . . In recent years, at least three-dozen NJCRAC member agencies have developed relationships with local Muslim groups arising from a shared concern about genocide in Bosnia. And the list goes on and on. Each of these collaborative activities builds relationships that both advance the social-justice agenda and engender support for public-affairs issues among the coalition partners.

At times, differences exist among coalition partners. As closely as the community-relations field works with the Catholic church on various issues, there are unbridgeable public-policy gulfs between our two communities on such questions as reproductive choice and aid to parochial schools. Nevertheless, neither community expects the other to abandon a position of principle either for short-term political advantage or for the sake of comity.

With regard to church-state separation, however, Mr. Wertheimer would ask the community-relations field to do exactly that. The dedication of organized Jewry to the separation of church and state is not political posturing, but . . . a core conviction that that principle has assured the right of Jews to full, unfettered participation in the civic life of this nation with no limits other than those imposed by one's interests and ability. This belief is neither transitory nor trendy. It does not depend on which party is in power. If there is a Jewish "contract" with America at all, it is with the U.S. Constitution and the protections that it provides us and all our nation's citizens.

LAWRENCE RUBIN
Executive Vice Chairman
National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

How frustrating it must be for Jack Wertheimer, trying to enjoy the new situation in Washington

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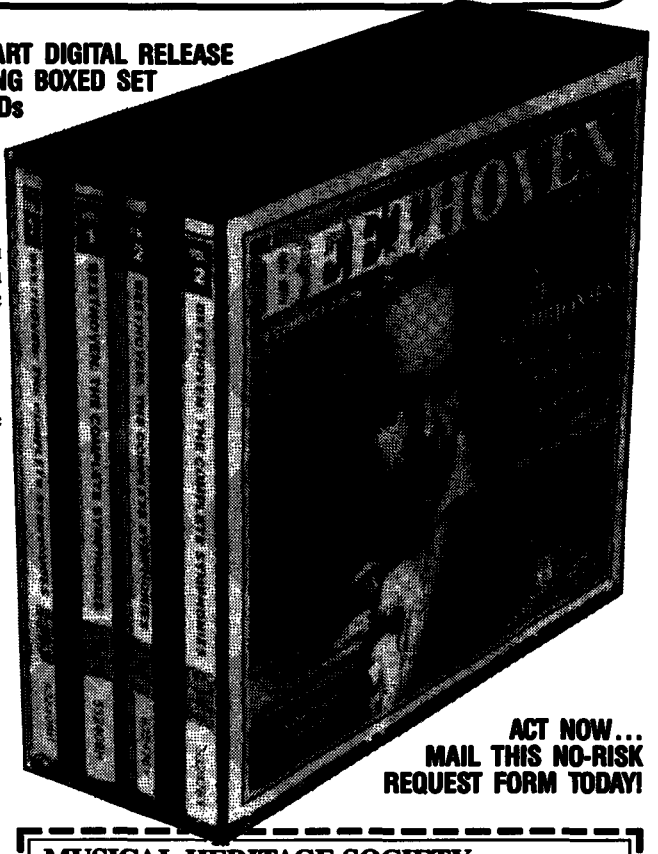

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yet finding that the overwhelming majority of his fellow Jews are still on the other side of the political divide.

I suppose we should be grateful in one respect to Mr. Wertheimer for expressing with such clarity his personal prescription for Jewish public policy today. Mr. Wertheimer would have us (a) abandon support for church-state separation; (b) suspend our concern for the disadvantaged; (c) withdraw from the struggle for adequate health-care coverage; (d) end our support for public education, protection of the environment, and a woman's right to choose; and (e) stop wasting our time in joining coalitions with minorities and other groups of Americans—except, of course, with conservative Republicans.

Most astonishing is his suggestion that we lower our voices on issues that might, as he puts it, "increase the level of tension" with other Americans. I would have thought that the days of "*sha, sha*" were gone forever.

What is obviously most troubling to Mr. Wertheimer is that so few Jews will adopt his agenda for Jewish community relations. If there were any substantial Jewish opposition to the policies of our community-relations organizations today, it would by now have come across loud and clear. Jews have never been bashful in expressing their dissent from positions taken by their communal organizations—I write as past national chair of NJCRAC and a past national vice president of the American Jewish Committee.

We Jews are a diverse people, with a wide variety of public-policy, religious, and philosophical views. While most of us have identified with the Democratic party, substantial numbers have always favored the Republicans. But regardless of party, the great majority of us have consistently supported certain core values. We put our concern for social justice ahead of our particular and personal self-interest and our own party affiliation. And we speak out proudly in support of the things we believe in.

Jewish freedom and security are integral to the larger social context. Jews are free to be Jews in America only because all men and women are free to be themselves. Jews are secure only to the extent that the laws and institutions of the society protect those of every class and race and religion. Why would Mr. Wertheimer want to weaken that protection?

JORDAN C. BAND
Cleveland, Ohio

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In "A Jewish Contract With America," Jack Wertheimer criticizes the field of Jewish community relations for not rooting its positions in Jewish tradition, for being narrow in its choice of coalition partners, and for concerning itself with issues not of particular significance to the Jewish community or to Jewish security. He also singles out concern for the environment as one example of such misplaced interest.

If Mr. Wertheimer were to look at the Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life (COEJL), the primary vehicle through which NJCRAC involves itself in environmental-protection, he would find that our efforts satisfy his basic criteria for Jewish involvement. . . .

• COEJL grounds concern for the environment in the traditions and values of all streams of American Jewish religious life. Furthermore, COEJL, through the offices of Mr. Wertheimer's own Jewish Theological Seminary, engages scholars from the various traditions in ongoing dialogue about ecological issues so that the Jewish perspective of our work will be continually deepened. . . .

• With 22 national Jewish organizations participating, COEJL constitutes the broadest issue-based coalition in the American Jewish community.

• The environment is an issue that brings Jews into coalition with a broad spectrum of Americans. Through the National Religious Partnership for the Environment, of which COEJL is a member, the Jewish community works with the Catholic, Protestant, and evangelical communities—again, a model of broad-based coalition work that goes beyond anything that could be construed as a liberal alliance.

• Environmental issues are at their heart about the *collective good*. Though Jews have no particular parochial interest in the environment, environmental well-being is at the core of the stability and security of any nation. . . .

Though many of those involved with COEJL believe that there are deep moral and religious reasons for Jews to be involved in environmental education and advocacy, Jewish participation in efforts to protect the environment is also justified by the pragmatic concerns articulated by Mr. Wertheimer.

MARK X. JACOBS
Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

My experience fully supports Jack Wertheimer's findings. I was a representative to the Dayton (Ohio) JCRC. Since I had became known for my non-politically-correct views, I was not selected to go, expense-paid, to the national meeting held in Washington that year. I was, however, permitted to go as a local representative at my own expense.

Just as Mr. Wertheimer says, I found the Joint Program plan which was voted on at the meeting to be a politically motivated exercise in matters extraneous to the Jewish community. To cite one example, among the issues being voted on was whether the Jewish community should support the "front-line states" in the battle against South Africa's then-apartheid government. Other than being against the South African government, these states had dubious credentials. I suggested therefore that a general statement against apartheid would be in order and that support for "front-line states" was far removed from the immediate concerns of the Jewish community. But as one person, with very few supporters, I failed to sway the meeting on this or any other issue. And for my vociferous objections to the outrageous agenda, I was disinvited as a representative to the local council.

In my experience, persons in the national office in New York first establish their own agenda and then use NJCRAC to further it. The only saving grace is that, to my knowledge, once the Joint Program Plan is approved and printed, it is never used again.

LAWRENCE BRISKIN
Dayton, Ohio

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I was not at all surprised to open the May issue of COMMENTARY and see an article criticizing this year's NJCRAC conference. I had the much-undeserved honor of attending the conference in February. (As a student at the University of Massachusetts, I was attending

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Hillel's Spitzer Forum, which this year was held in conjunction with that of NJCRAC.) By the conclusion of the opening plenum I was completely disgusted with what I had seen and heard. I had no idea that NJCRAC was such a blatantly partisan organization. I believed that any organization which claimed to represent "majority Jewish opinion" and had repeatedly stated that it wished to work with Congress, would not use such caustic language. . . . NJCRAC's board members did not simply take issue with most of the policies outlined in the Contract With America, they shrilly denounced them, using the harshest language. The balanced-budget amendment was called a "sham," tort reform was "welfare for the rich," and a constitutional amendment permitting school prayer "an attack against our freedom and principles." All the board members continued in the same vein. . . . By the end of the meeting, one of the students in the audience was so sickened that he mockingly grasped the vice president's hand and said: "Thank you, . . . thank you, for letting me finally realize that I am a Republican."

Jack Wertheimer is absolutely correct that the Jewish community-relations organizations are out of touch with today's political reality. . . .

JOSH SLOMICH
Amherst, Massachusetts

JACK WERTHEIMER writes:

Robert S. Rifkind devotes his letter to church-state matters. He contends quite persuasively that, given the heterogeneous nature of American society, school prayer is not feasible. He may well be correct. But his position is not the one that is most often taken by the Jewish community. Instead of arguing that school prayer is unworkable, Jewish organizations in the community-relations field contend that *any* breach in the wall between church and state must be fought as an attack on the sacred principle of separationism. Yet for most of American history, Jews have managed quite well to live with small breaches in that wall, particularly with respect to prayer in the public schools. It is only in recent decades that the organized Jewish community has seen fit to battle against *every* expression of religion in our public institutions. When Mr. Rifkind questions why I suggest that strict separationism reinforces secularism, he should consider what message this stance conveys to members of the Jewish community, let alone to outsiders, about the proper place of religion in people's lives. This position goes well beyond his original definition of separationism—preventing "the involvement of the state in matters of religion"—to the banishment of religion and its moral teachings from the public square.

Lawrence Rubin attempts to demonstrate that support for his organization's positions is widespread throughout the Jewish community. But in citing a survey of Jews in the San Francisco Bay area, he calls attention to a source that undermines his claims. When I examined the study he finds so persuasive, I discovered some surprising things. Fewer than 50 percent of all respondents and fewer than a third of respondents between the ages of 30 and 44 felt that Jewish agencies should be "strongly involved" with health care, immigration, the environment, government corruption, discrimination against blacks, welfare dependency, crime, and even U.S. foreign policy. And those defined as the "elite"—i.e., people who served on the Federation's board or committees and made contributions of $1,000 or more—were less eager than the rest of those surveyed to have Jewish agencies involved in *any* public-policy issues. Moreover, 54 percent of all respondents considered it all right for Christmas and Hanukkah symbols to appear in public places —in spite of the fact that such displays are the *bête noire* of the community-relations field. As it turns out, then, even in the San Francisco Bay area, a most Left-leaning community, there is no great enthusiasm for the NJCRAC agenda.

Mr. Rubin also addresses the matter of coalition-building. On this score I applaud his organization and the entire range of community-relations groups for the constructive role they play in helping the Jewish minority "make common cause with others." And in my article I urged NJCRAC and other groups to widen the circle of potential partners. But this can happen only if they abandon their fixation on what they call the "social-justice agenda," in reality a euphemism for one particular brand of politics, and recognize that there are a number of different agendas for improving society and bringing greater justice to this country.

Jordan C. Band begins his let-

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ter by acknowledging the "clarity" of my "personal prescription for Jewish public policy today," but then manages to misinterpret everything I wrote. According to Mr. Band, I urged the Jewish community to "abandon support for church-state separation," when in fact I called for a flexible approach to separationism. He accuses me of wanting the community to withdraw from a broad range of social, health, and environmental issues, when what I did was question the wisdom of speaking with one voice on such complex matters. He interprets my article as a call for Jews to stop working in "coalitions with other groups of Americans—except, of course, for conservative Republicans," when I actually proposed that the community widen its base of coalition partners to include Republicans, among others.

On one thing Mr. Band and I agree. The days of "*sha, sha*" should be over. We differ, though, in our assessment of when the Jewish community should take risks. I would have preferred to see Jewish organizations devoting less energy to developing a grandiose health-care proposal for America and instead expending greater effort in a more parochial Jewish cause: for example, by challenging the inordinately harsh sentence meted out to Jonathan Pollard, an issue on which the community-relations field lagged behind other sectors of American Jewish leadership. Evidently many Jewish organizations are more comfortable fighting for social justice when it is non-Jews who need help.

Mark X. Jacobs takes me to task for dismissing the concerns of environmentalists who wish to bring the teachings of the Jewish religious tradition to bear on a matter of supposedly serious Jewish concern. I have no problem with his using a letter-to-the-editor as a means of advertising the work of his organization, but his remarks have nothing to do with my article, which made only a glancing reference to environmentalism.

I am grateful to Lawrence Briskin and Josh Slomich for their words of support. The testimony of Messrs. Briskin and Slomich about their disenchantment with NJCRAC might help leaders like Mr. Band understand that dissent is not coming through "loud and clear" because dissenters walk away when they are marginalized.

History Standards

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

As one of the two faculty members responsible for overseeing the development of the Standards for Era 3 of the National World History Standards, I read with great interest Walter A. McDougall's article, "Whose History? Whose Standards?" [May]. I was also gratified that Mr. McDougall clearly had read and thought seriously about the book. I was, however, disturbed by his constant imputation of sinister motives to myself and my colleagues on the basis of unsubstantiated assumptions concerning our supposed intentions.

Our charge was simple. We were to develop Standards for a model world-history course. Nothing more. The course was to have three goals: (1) treat the history of civilization in both the Old and New Worlds; (2) consider interactions between them; and (3) cover fully the principal topics and themes of Western civilization.

Mr. McDougall's own analysis of the Standards leaves no doubt that we succeeded in fulfilling our mandate. Nevertheless, he is sure that our real goal was to "denigrate" Western civilization, and he spends most of his article attempting to ferret out evidence of this nefarious plan. So, in the case of Era 3 he accuses us of overvaluing the Mesoamerican Olmec, on the one hand, and of devaluing the Greeks, on the other hand, insisting that our primary message for students was that Athenian democracy was flawed "by slavery, class oppression, and patriarchy." We are even berated for *not* criticizing Christianity in the hope of placating the Bible Belt! Worst of all, he finds the Standards are simply too difficult for both teachers and students.

Mr. McDougall seems genuinely unwilling to believe that we might honestly have thought that the New World civilizations have a legitimate place in a world-history course or that we could have wanted students to learn *both* that the Greeks shared many of the flaws of other civilizations *and* that only the Greeks developed democracy, or that we did not criticize Christianity because we agreed with the best contemporary scholarship that early Christianity was the most dynamic cultural force in the Roman empire.

I also find disturbing Mr. McDougall's insistence that the Standards are just too hard. One of Lynne Cheney's most useful acts as chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities was to publish a pamphlet detailing what our European allies and Japan expect their students to know about history. If Mr. McDougall would examine the tests described in that pamphlet, he would discover that the level of historical knowledge and skill required to pass them is comparable to that demanded by the Standards. The many teachers and university faculty involved in the Standards project believed that American teachers and students also could work at that level. Unfortunately, Mr. McDougall apparently does not.

STANLEY M. BURSTEIN
California State University
Los Angeles, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Walter A. McDougall has written an excellent critique of the National Standards Project. However, there are a number of related matters which Mr. McDougall did not adequately discuss. In one important sense, the Standards are superfluous: their adoption would only strengthen currently existing tendencies toward politically-correct history.

Althea Nagai, Stanley Rothman, and I demonstrate in our recently published book, *Molding the Good Citizen* (Praeger 1995), that the content of high-school history textbooks has radically changed in recent years. Up through the 1960's, these books portrayed American history in a relatively benign and favorable light without glossing over its many problems. But by the 1980's, feminism, multiculturalism, and a more generalized debunking of American institutions had become standard textbook fare. For example, we are now told that the Declaration of Independence was intended for white males alone. Of course, we are not told why, if this were so, slavery so bothered the conscience of Jefferson and other Founding Fathers such as Washington and Franklin.

Second, both the books and the Standards did not get there by chance. *Contra* McDougall, it is not merely, or even largely, professors of history who have shaped the curriculum. The entire education establishment, textbook publish-

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ers, intellectual elites more generally, and even the federal government have contributed mightily to these dismal results.

In an article published in COMMENTARY ["Newspeak, Feminist-Style," April 1990], Stanley Rothman and I showed how feminists used the power of the government's Women's Educational Equity Program to help produce the curricular material necessary to stuff the textbooks with filler feminism. We also showed how eager the textbook publishers were to censor themselves by rewriting history textbooks to conform to a series of guidelines. These established quotas for the number of women, minorities, etc. that should be included in the textbooks. Last year's little-publicized Women's Gender Act promises additional government funding for more of the same, unless the Republican Congress has the courage to repeal the law.

Third, the real bias of the Standards is not merely their "ahistoricity." An ahistorical treatment of American history might conclude that the presidency of Ronald Reagan was the summa and omega of American history, and that perhaps Reagan was a Jefferson reborn. In fact, the precedence explicitly assigned to "[t]he struggle to carry out the environmentalist, feminist, and civil-rights agenda" shows that the true intent of the Standards' authors is to impose the same radical-egalitarian views dominant among the cultural elite on all of our children. While our would-be philosopher kings do not publicly announce their intentions, it is nonetheless evident in their writings. Thus, Standards co-director Gary Nash, in a piece funded by the Bradley Commission, denounced traditional treatment of American history as "white, male-oriented, [and] hero-worshipping."

It is ironic that Mr. McDougall quotes Carl Becker in support of the "singleness of purpose" in search of the truth. For Becker was one of the foremost apostles of historical relativism of the founding generation of progressive historians. Today's historians espouse a kind of neo-Beckerian view of history and of the growth of historical knowledge without, unfortunately, imitating his graceful prose style. In his presidential address to the American Historical Association, "Everyman His Own

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The Golan Heights

To Whom Do They Belong? Can Israel Survive Without Them?

Now that Gaza and part of Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") have been turned over to the Palestinians, the clamor for peace with Syria becomes ever more strident.It is understood that in order to attain such peace, it will be necessary for Israel to return the Golan Heights to Syria.

What are the facts?

Historical Background—The Golan was always part of the Jewish homeland. The Syrian claim to the Golan is tenuous. Syria, as a political entity, did not exist at all until after the first World War.

Even before the establishment of Israel in 1948, the Syrians subjected the villages in northern Israel to almost daily shellings, making normal life impossible. In the 1967 Six-Day War, Syria attacked Israel and was defeated. Israel occupied the Golan Heights and in 1981, for all practical purposes annexed the area.

Syria and its President—Syria is the most destabilizing influence in the Middle East. It is classified by the U.S. State Department as a narcotic-dealing and terrorist state. Its main fury is directed at Israel, which is perceived as a bulwark of Western influence and civilization, both of which Syria totally rejects.

> "With the Golan in Israeli hands, attacking Arabs could be confident of defeat and peace would be preserved. To hand the Golan to Syria is a prescription for war and for Israel's destruction."

Syria's President, Hafez Assad, is a tyrant, every bit as cunning as his Iraqi counterpart, Saddam Hussein. Under Assad, Syria is a world center for terrorism. It still harbors Nazi bigwigs who found welcome there after the World War. Few doubt that Assad was the mastermind in the suicide attack on the Marine barracks in Beirut in which 241 Americans died, and in the explosion of PanAm flight #103 in which 270 people lost their lives. He oversees one of the largest narcotics operations in the world.

Military Security—The Golan is about 10 miles wide, with a plateau on either side of a crest. If it were part of Syria it would be less than 1% of its territory. But it is of a supreme strategic importance to Israel. Its high ground provides early-warning capability, without which Israel would be subject to surprise attack by the Syrians. Its loss would obligate Israel to maintain a state of readiness and mobilization that would be economically and socially untenable. On the Golan itself, there are only two natural terrain bottlenecks through which tanks can advance. Those choke points are defensible and made possible the repulse of the 1400 Syrian tanks that attacked Israel in the 1973 war. But with the Golan in Syrian hands, and without the radar installations that would give Israel warning of any military movements, thousands of tanks—backed up by missiles and airplanes—could overrun Israel in a matter of hours. The Golan does not make for perfect defense, but it gives Israel a small breathing space for mobilization.

The Golan is the source of over one-third of Israel's fresh water. In 1964, with the Golan in Syrian hands, Syria attempted to divert these headwaters and to cripple Israel's water supply. It is more than likely that, given another opportunity, Syria would once again attempt to destroy Israel's water supply.

The current Israeli government, in its keen desire to bring peace to its people, after almost fifty years of war and bloodshed, would seem prepared to give up the limited strategic security it now enjoys by virtue of its possession of the high ground—the ridges of Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") and of the Golan Heights. But Israel should not return to the "death trap" borders of 1967 or anything close to it. In order to survive within such borders, Israel would have to rely on the goodwill of the Arab states, all of which—except for the cold peace with Egypt—are still in a declared state of war with Israel. An aggressor will attack only if confident of victory. With the Golan in Israeli hands, attacking Arabs could be confident of defeat, and peace would be preserved. To hand the Golan to Syria is a prescription for war and for Israel's destruction.

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Historian," Becker contended that Voltaire's clever remark, history is nothing more than a pack of tricks historians play on the dead for their own peace of mind, was essentially correct.

Nor was Becker's iconoclasm merely verbal; it also informed his work. In his well-known study of the Declaration of Independence, Becker came to believe that its doctrine was essentially meaningless metaphysical verbiage irrelevant to the demands of the modern world. His relativism, however, like that of historians today, did not prevent him from taking (authoritative?) stands on current issues. Like most intellectuals of his generation, Becker believed that America's problems stemmed from the lack of social control and too much individual freedom and that classical liberalism could only be a way station to some kind of collectivist future. Today his kind of relativism facilitates an easy acceptance of politically-correct history as well.

Yet perhaps it is true that even collectivist liberals of a certain kind did once share Mr. McDougall's beliefs about truth and liberty. Now most of them are dead, turned neoconservative, or are liberal in name only.

ROBERT LERNER
Rockville, Maryland

WALTER A. MCDOUGALL writes:

I seem to have landed in the midst of a crossfire, and I fully intend to duck.

For example, Stanley M. Burstein resents my apparent imputation of "sinister motives" to the authors of the History Standards, whereas Robert Lerner faults me for not assigning such motives to the "entire education establishment." I assure Mr. Burstein that I did not mean to impugn the motives of any particular authors, many of whom doubtless discharged their responsibilities with a high degree of professionalism. How sad, therefore, that the final product betrays so often the influence of persons more committed to political agendas than to historical integrity.

What is more, Mr. Burstein engages in imputation himself when he suggests that I refuse to accept the fact that he and his colleagues believe Mesoamerica has a place in world history. I myself think it does—boyhood wonder over "lost civilizations" helped to kindle my love of history. I merely objected to the fact that the Olmec was granted "Core" status while all the science, philosophy, and art of ancient Greece was merely "Related." Nor do I understand Mr. Burstein's remark to the effect that his team "did not criticize Christianity because . . . early Christianity was the most dynamic cultural force in the Roman empire." Does he really mean to say that the authors of the Standards chose which cultural forces to "criticize" on the basis of their relative "dynamism"? I do not think that is what he means, any more than I *wanted* Christianity criticized. I was simply registering my surprise that revealed religions were not given harsher treatment in a document otherwise so politically correct.

Are the Standards too difficult? Here we may well disagree, not over what is desirable (the tougher our schools, the better), but over what is possible. My years teaching the Western-Civ survey course at Berkeley made it painfully clear how many of those *elite* students (drawn from the top 10 percent of their high-school classes) were nevertheless ignorant of basic historical facts, barely literate, or unskilled in the use of data and logic. So I have to ask: does Mr. Burstein cover all the material in the World History Standards in his own survey courses? If so, do his students' bluebooks prove that they have assimilated most of that knowledge and can discuss it in good English prose? If so, does he believe that Los Angeles high-school teachers and pupils can aspire to the same level of achievement that he demands? If so, would he please encourage all those students to apply to my own school, the University of Pennsylvania?

Regarding Mr. Lerner's letter I can only say that I did not discuss his "related matters" because I wanted to assess the Standards on their own terms and within the space allotted me. Indeed, limitations on length also necessitated the omission of a passage on Carl Becker. My point would have been that *even* a Left New Dealer of the philosophical bent described by Mr. Lerner still respected the traditional canon and values of Western civilization, and the wisdom to be gleaned from its history. The same cannot be said of our current "progressives." By the standards of today's textbooks, Becker's would still be a gem.

A Tale of Two Scholars

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Cynthia Ozick's often enlightening article . . . , "Mark Twain and the Jews" [May], might have been less superficial and more factually accurate had she read my recent book, *"Our Famous Guest": Mark Twain in Vienna* (University of Georgia Press, 1992), or even if she had perused my entries on the subject in *The Mark Twain Encyclopedia* (J.R. LeMaster and James D. Wilson, eds., Garland Publishing, 1993), or the Fall 1985 issue of *The Mark Twain Journal* containing my discoveries about Twain's essay "Concerning the Jews," along with Sholom J. Kahn's excellent piece on Twain's philo-Semitism.

Had she done so she would have learned, for example, that "Concerning the Jews," arguably Mark Twain's most cogently organized polemical essay (or "meditation," as she calls it), has less to do with the Dreyfus Affair or the November 1897 language-war in the imperial Austrian parliament that precipitated . . . widespread anti-Semitic riots than with personal attacks on Twain himself in the Viennese anti-Semitic press during his residence there from September 27, 1897 until May 26, 1899.

It is true, as Miss Ozick observes, that Mark Twain was outraged by the anti-Semitic travesty on justice of both the first and second Dreyfus trials, to which he refers in "Concerning the Jews," and yet more bitterly in his satirical spoof, "From the 'London Times' of 1904." But the queries from an American Jewish lawyer about his report on the Austrian parliament, "Stirring Times in Austria," which provide Twain his rationale and organizing principle for "Concerning the Jews," are probably fictitious. Or at least the interlocutor himself may be but a fictive device.

Attacks on "*der Jude* Mark Twain" in such Viennese dailies as *Reichspost*, *Deutsches Volksblatt*, *Deutsche Zeitung*, and *Das Vaterland* and in the scurrilously anti-Semitic "humor" weekly *Kikeriki!* began within weeks of the Clemens family's arrival in the Habsburg capital and continued with increasing viciousness throughout their twenty-month sojourn.

The reasons for these attacks are threefold: Twain's closest friends and associates in Vienna were either Jewish journalists like Ferdinand Gross, Siegmund Schlesinger, and

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Theodor Herzl (Herzl had interviewed Twain in Paris in 1895; see his "Mark Twain and the British Ladies," reprinted in COMMENTARY, September 1959) or philo-Semites like the feuilletonist Eduard Pötzl (Twain's closest Viennese friend) and Princess Pauline Metternich and her circle; the assumption that, because the writer's real first name was Samuel—a name never given an Austrian Gentile—he must be Jewish himself; and finally Twain's ill-timed comical speech *auf deutsch* ridiculing the German language . . . to the philo-Semitic press club Concordia. . . .

Twain made no public comment on these press attacks, but "Concerning the Jews," which seems to have had a gestation period in his unpublished notebook for several months in 1897-98, was completed between July 19 and 26, 1898. . . . It is possible to date the essay's completion almost precisely because of the reference in the coda to a destructive tornado that traversed Vienna's Central Cemetery on the night of July 16, 1898 but left the Jewish section of the cemetery undamaged.

To be sure, Twain made some factual errors in this essay. His statistics about the number of Jews in the Austro-Hungarian empire are grossly inaccurate, as are the foolish assertions for which he later apologized that Jews were reluctant soldiers in the armies of their adopted countries. Although his analysis of the root causes of anti-Semitism, his oblique sneer at Zionism, and his proposal of assimilation and political activism as remedies may be offensive to many and at least debatable, there is no question that this essay is well-intended and that it exculpates the writer from any taint of racism or prejudice at this stage of his life. He writes quite accurately: "I am quite sure that (bar one) I have no race prejudices. . . . All that I care to know is that a man is a human being—that is enough for me: he can't be any worse." The one he admits to ("bar one") we know was the French, for whom he had an almost pathological lifetime distrust and dislike that was exacerbated by the Dreyfus case.

Twain accurately predicted in a letter to his financial adviser in New York, Henry Huttleston Rogers, that this essay, which he called his "gem of the ocean," would please "neither Jew nor Christian." Nevertheless, the immediate Jewish reaction was not all negative, as Miss Ozick suggests in her quotation from the *London Jewish Chronicle* ("Of all such advocates, we can but say, 'Heaven save us from our friends.'"). Several Jewish publications in this country reviewed Twain's essay more favorably. Nor is Twain's essay considered "charmingly philo-Semitic," as Miss Ozick insists, "mainly by those who have never read it." No less an authority on both Mark Twain and anti-Semitism than Sholom J. Kahn of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem has interpreted the essay in this manner. And Sigmund Freud, Vienna's number-one Mark Twain fan during and after the American writer's sojourn there, recalled the essay's "partisanship from someone who was not a Jew" . . . in "A Comment on Anti-Semitism," an article Freud wrote in the last year of his life. . . .

Mark Twain is hardly to blame for the attempt by an American Nazi during the 1930's to distort the meaning of "Concerning the Jews," ripping passages from their contexts to make it appear an unfriendly if not downright anti-Semitic tract. Bernard DeVoto, then the literary executor of the Mark Twain estate, quickly refuted and scotched such diabolical misuse. The episode provides a cautionary tale for those who interpret Mark Twain's works in light of their own intellectual milieu and agenda. Miss Ozick faults Twain, for instance, for not having taken account of the plight of Galician and Russian Jews at the end of the last century, forgetting the fact that he was writing out of his own experiences of anti-Semitism in Vienna and had had no first-hand experience with anything in Europe east of Budapest, where he spent a week in March 1899. . . .

The most commendable aspect of Miss Ozick's article has nothing to do with the subject announced in her title but with her linkage of the short story, "The Man That Corrupted Hadleyburg," certainly one of Mark Twain's very best, with other things he wrote during his Viennese sojourn and with what he witnessed there. She is particularly incisive in her delineation of the parallels between what happens in the town-hall assembly in the story and what Twain had already described in "Stirring Times in Austria." . . .

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Altogether Mark Twain wrote all or part of over 30 works in various forms and lengths during his twenty months in Vienna—the last great surge of creativity in his long, widely diverse career. Many of the pieces he wrote between 1897 and 1899 were not published until the 1960's, and then only in scholarly editions that did not reach the general reading public. Some are still in unpublished manuscripts in the Mark Twain Papers in the Bancroft Library of the University of California at Berkeley. These late works deserve to be more widely read than they have been, and Cynthia Ozick has performed a valuable service in bringing some of them to the attention of COMMENTARY's readers, perhaps for the first time.

CARL DOLMETSCH
College of William and Mary
Williamsburg, Virginia

To the Editor of COMMENTARY:

What a pleasure to read Cynthia Ozick's "Mark Twain and the Jews." Miss Ozick wields a mighty pen, and her critical essays are always brilliant, learned, profound, and touch eloquently on central issues.

Properly, she focuses on Mark Twain's stay in Vienna . . . and spells out some of the myriad ways in which his Austrian writings foreshadowed ("prophesied") 20th-century tensions and catastrophes. She is right on target when she emphasizes problems of language, cultural "myths," the Dreyfus Affair, psychological complexities, and so forth. Having ventured into a jungle of controversies, she has succeeded in coping very well.

Of course, in a magazine like COMMENTARY an academic bibliography would not have been appropriate. I trust, therefore, that a few footnotes from Mark Twain scholarship . . . might be welcome in a letter, and not seem pedantic. . . .

Miss Ozick's "ordinary" job of reading (as she phrases it) is really quite extraordinary, and touches on many debated areas. For example, she wrestles capably with the problem of "the Man" in Twain's story, "The Man That Corrupted Hadleyburg," emphasizing his "humanity"—but finally accepting him "probably" as "the devil." . . .

In my book, *Mark Twain's Mysterious Stranger: A Study of the Manuscript Texts* (1978), I argue at length for *two* distinct contexts and texts. In Vienna, Mark Twain began the never-completed "Chronicle of Young Satan"—where Dream ("*Traum*") tells the boys he is an *unfallen* angel (the Devil, he says is his uncle)—though we may or may not believe him. He later completed "No. 44, The Mysterious Stranger," whose protagonist remains ambiguous till the end, but is clearly (I think) to be understood as an angel figure. And all these can be related to remarkable notes for an unwritten satire, "The Devil's Sunday School." In any case, the entire subject is very subtle and complex.

Similarly, "Concerning the Jews" has been read both philo-Semitically and anti-Semitcally. Twain was well aware of the dangerous waters he had entered; and that, precisely, is why it is such a profound work. In a critical essay on the subject, I argued that it should be understood, with all its ambivalences, as a piece of witty *satire*.

One could go on at length with such annotations, but I must be content here to address briefly one large (and elusive) problem: estimates of Twain's culture and character. (Carl Dolmetsch's book, "*Our Famous Guest*," is especially good in these areas.) Twain was certainly a man full of contradictions: self-critical (as in the late statement about "malignity" quoted by Miss Ozick); ironical (as in the famous maxims); tactful (when he wanted to be) but sometimes given to temper tantrums (the art of "cursing"); honest to a fault (but also the author of "On the Decay of the Art of Lying"); etc. Recently published volumes of *The Mark Twain Papers* document in detail these and related aspects of his poorly understood "final phase" (the last two decades), on which I have concentrated most of my attention. . . . After all, it was Twain who wrote both *Pudd'nhead Wilson* and *Joan of Arc*.

It is all too easy to select some aspects of his amazing complexity and so "create" a Clemens-Mark-Twain of one's own . . . Miss Ozick finds Twain, not without some justification, a "belligerent village atheist"; however, I think in those last years he had become a very sophisticated "man of the world" (see his remarkable essay, "Is Shakespeare Dead?," 1909). But Miss Ozick's sense of justice here is admirable: "Perhaps it would be fairer to suppose that he lacked

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the disposition for disciplined caution."

Having lived with "Mr. Clemens and Mark Twain" for many years, I feel certain of at least two things: his heart, as we say, was in the right place; and he was a splendid artist. One of America's best, right up there with Melville, Whitman, Dickinson, Emerson, Thoreau, Faulkner, and the like. A great satirist, but *never* (really) "malicious." Our representative American folk artist and patriot. As I once tried to show, a sort of American "Rabelais."

I fear, however, that in the last two pages of her closely organized essay Miss Ozick becomes selective in an unfortunate way. I do not disagree with most of her facts and quotations, but rather with her estimates relating to "malignity." For a well-balanced (*not* sentimentalized) treatment of Twain, see such books as Hamlin Hill's *Mark Twain: God's Fool* (1973) and Everett Emerson's *The Authentic Mark Twain* (1984).

SHOLOM J. KAHN
Hebrew University
Jerusalem, Israel

CYNTHIA OZICK writes:

Carl Dolmetsch softens into some welcome generosity at the close of his letter, and for that I am grateful; but he begins by charging me with factual inaccuracy—a charge he nowhere supports—and with superficiality, a reproof I have not often earned. I do not believe I have earned it now, thanks in part to Mr. Dolmetsch's own scholarship. He is mistaken in supposing that I have ignored his labors. I have, in fact, considerably profited from them.

He accuses me, for instance, of omitting mention of the attacks on Mark Twain in Vienna's anti-Semitic press. I certainly did speak of these ("the noisome anti-Semitic press," I wrote, "vulgarly denounced Mark Twain either as a Jew-lover or as himself a secret Jew"), and my source was precisely Mr. Dolmetsch's own articles in *The Mark Twain Encyclopedia* ("Jews," pp. 413-15; "Austria [Austria-Hungary]," pp. 49-53). It appears that Mr. Dolmetsch, in erroneously reprimanding me for not having read his work, was so intent on the reprimand that he missed noting in my essay the several points he had himself supplied.

Of course, if my essay had been a scholarly article in an academic journal rather than a purely belletristic exploration, the presence of footnotes would have spared him this embarrassment: he would have seen himself cited and would perhaps have been able to recognize his own richly informative influences.

As to Mr. Dolmetsch's speculation that a letter in Mark Twain's "Concerning the Jews" may have been an authorial invention (a speculation appearing also in one of his encyclopedia articles; indeed, his letter is very nearly a reprise of these): it is of no import to the common reader, and surely not to any substantive discussion of contents. Nor is the absence in my essay of any report of Mr. Dolmetsch's personal guesswork in any way equivalent to "factual inaccuracy."

Mr. Dolmetsch quarrels with my comment that "Concerning the Jews" is "remembered (perhaps mainly by those who have never read it) as charmingly philo-Semitic," and repeats the celebrated witticism my essay emphatically included: "All that I care to know is that a man is a human being—that is enough for me; he can't be any worse." That is the famous sentence quoted everywhere; what is not so well-known is the infamous further matter in "Concerning the Jews," one of those late works that Mr. Dolmetsch believes "deserves to be more widely read than they have been." In short, the issue is, so to speak, one of cultural synecdoche—the part standing for the whole; and the whole is generally unread. It was that unread further matter I sought to call attention to—not to malign the humanity of Mark Twain, but to render more complete his popular reputation on the subject of Jews.

If there is unpleasantness in this fuller portrait, Mr. Dolmetsch himself does not flinch from acknowledging it. "Nevertheless," he has written,

> despite a confined knowledge of the Torah (in its King James Version of the Old Testament), [Twain] apparently remained uninformed about the Talmud, Jewish theology, liturgy, and religious practices, and even about Jewish life (especially ghetto and *shtetl* life) itself. He seems, moreover, to have accepted several ancient myths: of Jewish wealth, which confirmed his view that economic envy rather than Christian doctrine was the root cause of latter-day prejudice against Jews; of a Jewish propensity for

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cheating and shady dealing; and, until he was disabused, of the Jew's reluctance to bear arms for his adopted country. A firm assimilationist, he was unsympathetic, even derisive, toward Theodor Herzl's Zionism (*The Mark Twain Encyclopedia*, 1993, p. 413).

Since Mr. Dolmetsch clearly recoils from these unsavory notions as much as I do, why, then, does he wish to make light of my own negative responses to these canards, and how, in the face of such material, can he claim that a piece of writing offering anti-Semitic nonsense as truthful history "exculpates the writer from any taint of racism or prejudice at this stage of his life"? And yes, if the American Nazi movement made use of these anti-Semitic passages, their author bears some culpability—not, it goes without saying, for having his words pinched by thugs, but assuredly for voluntarily attaching an honorable literary name to old poisons. The only "cautionary tale" to be found is that a little bit of anti-Semitism has the (often unforeseen) capacity to go a long way.

It is also not reasonable, I think, to be too indulgent toward Mark Twain's "not having taken account of the plight of Galician and Russian Jews at the end of the century" on the ground that he "had no firsthand experience with anything in Europe east of Budapest." Here Mr. Dolmetsch's intimation that I stand "among those who would interpret Mark Twain's works in light of their own intellectual milieu and agenda" is strikingly unfounded. In Mark Twain, after all, we have a supremely sophisticated and many-layered modern mind with access to newspapers, world events, the psychology of societies. And when Mark Twain did turn to his immediate (American) experience, what he reported seeing was storekeepers, not Rothschilds; yet the direct evidence of his own eyes did him no good and had no instructive value in the face of the ingrained mythology of the Rich Jew.

While I am glad to credit Mr. Dolmetsch with providing me with certain interesting data—especially in view of his failure to recognize his own contributions—it remains only to be said that an independent reader of literary works trusts less to the accumulation of data than to the sympathetic imagination. But no intuition is viable without a foundation in fact. Mr. Dolmetsch is right to emphasize his dedication to the minutiae of scholarship, and I hope he will concede that I have not betrayed his credo.

I HAD already written the above pained paragraphs when Sholom J. Kahn's wholly kind-hearted letter was set before me. (A Tale, one might put it, of Two Scholars.) Mr. Kahn's acknowledgment that "in a magazine like COMMENTARY an academic bibliography would not have been appropriate" is relieving. The works both he and Mr. Dolmetsch allude to, including their own, should stimulate readers to further inquiry (and pleasure) in the study of Mark Twain's life and letters. As for myself, I look forward to the corrective balance Mr. Kahn promises in the volumes mentioned in his final paragraph.

I admit to deep puzzlement, however, in the face of his suggestion that "Concerning the Jews" might be "understood, with all its ambivalences, as a piece of witty *satire*." Well, in part yes: the notion, for instance, that the Jews have been "money-getters" ever since Joseph in Egypt "took a nation's money all away, to the last penny" is so breathtakingly preposterous an improvisation that it might stand as a spoof of the senseless theories spun out by the anti-Semitic imagination. But then how are we to regard the warmly positive parts of the same essay? When Mark Twain summarizes "the very quintessentials of good citizenship" and attributes them to Jews ("quiet, peaceable, industrious, unaddicted to high crime and brutal dispositions," etc.), favorably commenting also on Jewish family life and Jewish charitableness, are we to suppose that this too emerges from a satiric spirit? It strikes me as unlikely that a consummate artist such as Mark Twain would be capable of constructing an essay so lopsided in form that earnestness (the good parts, presumably) would be contradicted by the sudden introduction of travesty. And if it were indeed the writer's intent to slide from truthfulness into burlesque, would he not give some internal sign?

And while Mr. Kahn reminds us of Mark Twain's amazing range—"After all," he writes, "it was Twain who authored both *Pudd'nhead Wilson* and *Joan of Arc*"—is there not some relevance here in noting that the differing moods and modes of these books are not intermingled in the selfsame manuscript? Moreover, Mr. Dolmetsch informs us that Mark Twain, speaking of "Concerning the Jews," "predicted . . . that 'neither Jew nor Christian will approve of it.'" Doesn't this suggest that he expected Christian bigots to be annoyed by the favorable statements, and defensive Jews to resent the nasty ones? And doesn't it also suggest that he regarded the essay's positive and negative descriptions as equally true?

"One of America's best," Mr. Kahn concludes with charming brio, and no one would think of disputing him. Who does *not* love Mark Twain? That may be why, in preparing to issue, next year, a facsimile edition of a 1900 "complete" Mark Twain, Oxford University Press determined to ask contemporary novelists to write the introductions—writers who are not professional scholars. Mark Twain, Mr. Kahn will surely agree, belongs first of all to the readers who read not primarily for study, but mainly for delight. (Mr. Kahn is clearly attached both to the study *and* to the delight.)

Yet in encountering even the greatest and most cherished figures of our literature (from Chaucer to Shakespeare to Dickens to T.S. Eliot), it is the melancholy experience of readers of all temperaments to fall on occasion into sighs of disappointment with regard to unexpected outcroppings of anti-Semitism. Concerning "Concerning the Jews," I fear one can only murmur, "*Et tu*, Mark Twain?" Even you?

Note

In Robert Kagan's article, "A Retreat From Power?" (July), we inadvertently neglected to cite the source of a number of quotations from an essay by Peter W. Rodman. That essay, "Points of Order," appeared in *National Review* (May 1, 1995).—ED.

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An Exchange

IQ, Race, and Heredity

Charles Murray & Critics

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In "'The Bell Curve' and Its Critics" [May], Charles Murray does your readers a disservice by using the same standards of evidence and scholarship that he adopted in the book he wrote with the late Richard J. Herrnstein. By portraying himself as a persecuted scholar held to higher standards than other social scientists by his critics, he hints darkly at a unified conspiracy against him by like-minded but intellectually slovenly social scientists.

The academic response to his book does not present a united front. There is much more subtlety to the criticism of his work than Mr. Murray's broad-brush summary conveys. It is surely disingenuous for him to lump serious academic criticism with the inflammatory journalistic reviews that appeared in the popular press. As one of the critics mentioned by name, and the first person thanked in the acknowledgments section of *The Bell Curve*, I wish to report that Mr. Murray does not mention or respond to any of my substantive criticisms of his work, nor does he mention any of the fundamental points of agreement that have emerged in the literature that responds to his work. (My survey is scheduled for publication in the October 1995 issue of the *Journal of Political Economy*, the house journal of the University of Chicago. A more popular version appeared in *Reason* magazine, March 1995.)

The basic premise of the book is that *g*—or a single factor of intelligence—explains behavior, and that it is immutable. An essential flaw in this argument is that it equates skill with general intelligence, contrary to the findings of a large body of research in social science. No one denies that "one factor" accounts for "a lot" of the variability in test scores across persons. But using the methodological standards adopted by Herrnstein and Murray themselves, more than one factor is required to explain test scores and wages. In reality, as many as four factors are required to explain wages.

Mr. Murray's appeal for support to the work of Raymond Carroll is misleading. Carroll's reanalysis of test-score data does *not* support the single *g* model—contrary to the claims made by Mr. Murray (see p. 706 of Carroll's *Human Cognitive Abilities*, 1993). In fact, Carroll finds evidence that multiple skills explain social performance, and account for correlations among tests.

None of this denies that ability tests predict something valued in society. But Carroll's evidence and the evidence cited in my review indicate that many skills affect outcomes and not all can be equated with native intelligence. Once this is recognized, a core argument in *The Bell Curve* evaporates and a much more subtle analysis of social policy is required. Even if IQ cannot be manipulated, partial offsets for it are available because success in life depends on more than raw intelligence.

Mr. Murray seeks to avoid the hard job of evaluating social programs designed to boost skills by claiming that skills are synonymous with IQ; that IQ cannot be manipulated; and that nothing else can compensate for a low IQ. There is ample evidence that Mr. Murray's measure of "intelligence"—really a score on an achievement test—can be manipulated by educational interventions, that many skills besides raw intelligence are valued in society, and that these skills can be produced by environment.

JAMES J. HECKMAN
University of Chicago
Chicago, Illinois

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Charles Murray's brief attempted rebuttal of the article I published over six months ago in the *New York Review of Books* consists mainly of a distortion of my arguments and, even more unfortunately, a whitewash of the Pioneer Fund—the far-right organization which funded much of the pseudo-scholarship upon which *The Bell Curve* relies.

Mr. Murray writes that I "alleged" Pioneer was "established and run by men who were Nazi sympathizers, eugenicists, and advocates of white racial superiority."

There is nothing alleged about it. The 1937 charter of the Pioneer Fund specified its goal as aiding "parents of unusual value as citizens," who were defined as those "descended primarily from white persons who settled in the original thirteen states prior to the adoption of the Constitution of the United States."

Wyckliffe Draper, whose fortune founded the Pioneer Fund, was an ardent eugenicist. The most ideologically influential of the fund's five founding directors, Harry Laughlin, was superintendent of the Eugenics Record Office and campaigned in the U.S. for the sterilization of the "feeble-minded." He served as honorary vice president (in absentia) of a eugenics conference in Berlin in 1935, and drummed up support in the U.S. for Nazi eugenics policy. It was Laughlin who persuaded Draper to undertake the Pioneer Fund's first activity, in 1937: funding the distribution in America of an edited version of the German eugenics propaganda film *Erbkrank* ("Hereditary Illness").

"Never mind," Mr. Murray adds, that "the relationship between the founder of the Pioneer Fund and today's Pioneer Fund is roughly analogous to the relationship be-

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tween Henry Ford and today's Ford Foundation."

This is a spurious analogy. Yes, in 1918 Henry Ford published a series of anti-Semitic tracts in his Dearborn newspaper, including the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. Nine years later, he apologized (sincerely or not), retracted his statements, and shut down the newspaper. In 1936, he created the Ford Foundation to support the Henry Ford Hospital and other charitable activities in Michigan.

Henry Ford died in 1947; his heirs eventually surrendered all control over the selection of directors and the funding activities of the foundation. Not surprisingly, then, Henry Ford's anti-Semitism and right-wing ideology have no lingering influence whatsoever over today's Ford Foundation, which has an endowment of $6.8 billion and 400 employees worldwide. Ford grants, in fact, are frequently criticized for supporting left-wing minority organizations.

Today's Pioneer Fund, by contrast, has made no apology, even a perfunctory one, for the extreme right-wing leanings of its founders. The only changes have been cosmetic, such as deleting the reference to "white" persons from its charter—in 1985. Such concessions to fashion aside, the Pioneer Fund remains true to the essential purposes of its founders. Virtually every project the fund has underwritten has had to do with "proving" the mental inferiority of black people.

This is largely because the $5-million fund consists of a group of five unpaid "directors," of whom the only fully active decision-maker is Harry Weyher. Weyher, a New York lawyer, is the chosen successor of Wyckliffe Draper. Draper picked him because of his ideological reliability; Weyher shared Draper's opposition to the *Brown* v. *Board of Education* decision.

ACCORDING to Mr. Murray, the "main substantive issue" I discuss relative to his book is African IQ. In fact, my article also took on his arguments about Asian IQ, and his claims about the purported impact of immigration on America's intelligence supply.

As for the matter of African IQ, however, my article did not, as Mr. Murray's distorted summary would have it, "point to the many technical difficulties of knowing exactly what is going on." Rather, I pointed out that Mr. Murray's data contradict his own contention—which was that low African IQ scores suggest that the low scores of African-Americans are due to genetic and other factors, rather than a history of oppression in the United States.

Mr. Murray's claim of extremely low African IQ derives from tests conducted in South Africa before the end of apartheid. This fact was not revealed in *The Bell Curve*—and small wonder. South Africa is hardly a place to find black people free from the effects of centuries of oppression. In fact, low IQ scores there can easily be construed to support the view that lower black intellectual achievement is a result of racism. This is anything but a "technical" issue.

Mr. Murray's "facts" about Africa came from Pioneer-funded British psychologist Richard Lynn. Lynn, an editor of the notoriously racialist journal *Mankind Quarterly* (which, *pace* Murray, is neither "respected" nor "refereed"), is on record in support of the scientifically absurd view that the "proliferation" of the poor and other "weak specimens" needs to be discouraged in the interests of "the genetic quality of the group."

Not surprisingly, then, this "scholar" accepted South African IQ test results at face value, as a fair test of the inherent intellectual capabilities of blacks not only in South Africa but in the continent as a whole. And Mr. Murray replicated his error.

In 1968, Richard Nixon had a secret plan to end the war in Vietnam. Charles Murray now assures us that he has "many more details" that would clinch his argument about African IQ, but these were omitted from *The Bell Curve* because—well, Mr. Murray doesn't say why. He does say that I "want this literature to be weak and racist." How can I "want" it to be anything, when I don't even know it exists?

Perhaps Charles Murray did not know all the facts about the Pioneer Fund and *Mankind Quarterly* when he wrote his book. But now that he does, he must cease to deny them. He must deal openly and honestly with their implications for *The Bell Curve*. For a man who depicts himself in the pages of COMMENTARY as a brave struggler for unpleasant but vital truth, this is an appropriate test of intellectual courage. The Pioneer Fund and *Mankind Quarterly* are not mainstream, modern scientific institutions. They are scientific racism's keepers of the flame. And scientific racism is one of the scourges of this century.

CHARLES LANE
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TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

There are few things more predictable than an author's response to reviews of his work, so it is not surprising that Charles Murray found Peter Brimelow's review to be "the best published synopsis of *The Bell Curve*." Brimelow likened the book to Darwin's *Origin of Species*, "the intellectual event with which it is being seriously compared." Brimelow, who wants immigration laws changed so that America's "racial balance" will be "shifted back . . . where it was in 1960: almost 89 percent white . . .," shares Mr. Murray's abhorrence of affirmative action and "quotas." *Those* quotas favor blacks and Latinos.

What was not so predictable was the enormously successful marketing campaign for *The Bell Curve* engineered by the American Enterprise Institute (AEI) and the Free Press. The barrage of reviews in major newspapers and magazines, just as the book was published, propelled it to the best-seller lists and the talk shows, and into public consciousness. The reviews were carefully cultivated by AEI. Mr. Murray, in COMMENTARY, described an AEI-sponsored "conference of academics and journalists from various points on the political spectrum [held] soon after the book's publication." The authors of many journalistic puff pieces, including Brimelow, had been invited to that conference, expenses paid, and had been provided with advance copies of the book.

The *Wall Street Journal*—it occupies a point well to the Left on Murray's political spectrum—indicated that the book had been "swept forward by a strategy that provided book galleys to likely supporters while withholding them from likely critics." The *Journal* suggested that AEI "tried to fix the fight when it released review copies selectively, contrary to usual publishing protocol." That charge was denied by AEI president Christopher DeMuth, who in a letter to the *Journal* indicated that the

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conference had in fact been held "several weeks before publication." DeMuth asserted that he had "made a particular effort to attract likely critics to the conference . . . with the [deliberate] exception of Leon Kamin." That most unkindest cut smarts, but I will try now to rise to the critical occasion. My allotted space permits adequately detailed discussion of only a single topic. I will focus here on the Herrnstein-Murray treatment of race and IQ. (My detailed critique of the book appears in *The Bell Curve Debate*, edited by R. Jacoby and N. Glauberman, Times Books/Random House.)

Mr. Murray describes his book as "relentlessly moderate—in its language, . . . filled with 'on the one hand, on the other hand' discussions. . . . Anchored securely in the middle of the scientific road." But the book's description of affirmative action as "a poison leaking into the American soul" suggests passion, not moderation; and the even-handedness of Mr. Murray's middle-of-the-road position is exemplified by his comments on the relationship of genes to race differences in IQ. On the one hand, "it is scientifically prudent at this point to assume that both environments and genes are involved, in unknown proportions." But, on the other hand, "Herrnstein and I did not make nearly as aggressive a case for genetic differences as the evidence permits."

The nonaggressive approach taken in *The Bell Curve* was to examine

> a hypothesis Herrnstein and I heard frequently, that the test scores of American blacks have been depressed by the experience of slavery. We briefly summarize the literature indicating that African blacks in fact have lower test scores than American blacks . . . on standardized mental tests, including ones especially designed for illiterate non-Western subjects.

The logic here is: if slavery made American blacks dumb, then African blacks, who have merely been colonized, not enslaved, should be smarter than their genetic kinfolk in America. But in fact they are dumber! So American blacks must be dumb because of their genes. There is still a problem, however. Why should American blacks be smarter than their African cousins? Herrnstein and Murray maintain that "The IQ of 'colored' students in South Africa—of mixed racial background—has been found to be similar to that of American blacks." Miscegenation appears to have paid off, to the tune of some 15 IQ points for American blacks. That follows since Richard Lynn, described in *The Bell Curve* as "a leading scholar of racial and ethnic differences," after summarizing the literature, estimated the average IQ of Africans to be 70. That is to say, half of all Africans are mentally retarded. That finding evidently struck Herrnstein and Murray as reasonable. What, one wonders, would Mr. Murray's more aggressive case for genetic differences look like?

But let us examine the test, widely used in Africa, which was "designed for illiterate non-Western subjects." The test is Raven's Progressive Matrices. Average scores on the Matrices, like those on other "IQ" tests, have been rising steadily over time throughout the world. A massively large study of Dutch draftees, using the Matrices, found that average IQ scores in Holland had risen by about 25 IQ points between 1950 and 1982! Richard Lynn concluded that

> requirements for a culture-fair test are far from being met by the Progressive Matrices. . . . The testee has to decipher the code and then solve the progression problem. These largely arithmetical skills are of course taught in schools. Dutch adolescents in the 1980's have enjoyed significantly more schooling . . . no doubt they have picked up a few more arithmetical skills. . . .

These observations did not prevent Lynn, four years later, from tabulating, in a review article, numerous African studies using the Matrices. *The Bell Curve* depended upon that review-article for its estimates of genetically debased African IQ.

Lynn himself felt that "the best single study of the Negroid intelligence" was performed in South Africa by Kenneth Owen, using the Junior Aptitude Tests. Zulu schoolchildren did very poorly on the test, so much so that Lynn judged their average IQ to be 69. Owen (but not Lynn, or Herrnstein and Murray) pointed out that "the knowledge of English of the majority of black testees was so poor that certain [of the] tests . . . proved to be virtually unusable." To do well, Owen wrote, Zulu pupils would have had to have been familiar with electrical appliances, microscopes, and "Western type of ladies' accessories."

Charles Murray has written that "the social science that deals in public policy" has become "in a word, corrupt." Pithy, and the shoe does fit *The Bell Curve*.

LEON J. KAMIN
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TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Charles Murray takes the stance that many people have made an inappropriate fuss over *The Bell Curve*'s treatment of race and IQ, and professes himself bemused that "the critics have been obsessed—no hyperbole here—with genes . . . ," inasmuch as the book simply makes the point that

> a legitimate scientific debate is under way about the relationship of genes to race differences in intelligence; that it is scientifically prudent at this point to assume that both environment and genes are involved, in unknown proportions; and, most importantly, that people are getting far too excited about the whole issue.

If this were all the book had really said on the topic of race and IQ, the furor would indeed be a puzzle. But in fact, Herrnstein and Murray make three assertions about race and IQ pointing to the likely biological basis of race differences in IQ and to the probability that they are not eradicable by any means currently known. . . . (I have recently criticized the way Herrnstein and Murray make these points in a chapter in *The Bell Curve Wars*, edited by Steve Fraser, Basic Books.)

First, as to Herrnstein and Murray's purported "review" of the direct evidence on heritability of race differences in IQ. This consists of presenting, at substantial length, only one of seven extant studies on the question. This is an adoption study showing that black children adopted into white families have lower IQ's than white children adopted into white families. Despite the original investigators' cautions that their study could not be taken as evidence for a genetic basis for IQ differences between the races—for a variety of reasons ranging from the possibility that white children might have been placed with more intelligent families to the possibility that emotional and adjustment difficulties

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would have been present for the black adoptees—Herrnstein and Murray declare the study to constitute strong evidence of the heritability of race differences.

The remaining six studies are all more consistent with the alternative position that genetic differences are negligible or that they favor blacks slightly. Herrnstein and Murray dismiss one of these studies in a single paragraph, citing interpretive difficulties of the same sort they neglect to mention for the study they favor. Another study is dismissed on the same sort of grounds in a note in the appendix. The other four studies are not mentioned at all.

The second major point of the case for genetics is that one cannot hope that low cognitive abilities of either blacks or whites can be much improved by intervention of any kind. They review two studies on intervention in infancy, both of which had very positive results but which they reject on methodological grounds. They ignore a dozen studies not subject to such criticisms but having results consistent with the two they reject. These additional studies include a recent, very large study conducted at eight different sites.

Herrnstein and Murray conclude that although vigorous post-infancy, preschool interventions boost IQ by 7 points or so, this is of little importance because gains fade by third grade. Yet it should be obvious (except to those holding dubious "ballistic" or "critical-period" theories of early intervention) that one would expect gains to be maintained only if enrichment were maintained. Herrnstein and Murray do not mention the evidence that this is, in fact, the case. More importantly, with one exception, they do not mention the interventions that have been initiated in elementary school. William J. Bennett, Ronald Reagan's Secretary of Education, has described a score of such programs that have proved effective. Detailed reports on many of them appear in the education literature. The single elementary-school study reported on in *The Bell Curve* is an intervention that produced a gain of between 1.5 and 6.5 IQ points in a single year. This they discount because it is only one study and data could not be obtained on the question of the maintenance of the gains.

Though it is known that intermediate-school and high-school math programs can have a very dramatic effect on minority children's math scores, this is also not mentioned. Finally, college programs exist that have a marked impact on minority achievement in several different specific fields, and on overall grade-point average. Yet again none of these demonstrations is mentioned.

In short, the review of intervention programs is so highly selective as to be misleading in the extreme, and so negative about the programs it does discuss as to forfeit any claim to represent balanced analysis.

Now, as for the 15-point gap in IQ between blacks and whites, Herrnstein and Murray refer to 10 studies of the current gap in IQ (or in a composite of abilities that is highly correlated with IQ). Summarizing these studies, they allow that the gap might have narrowed to 12 or 13 points now, though elsewhere in the book and several times in recent public statements by Mr. Murray, including his article in COMMENTARY, this gap is restored to a full 15 points. In fact, however, the current gap indicated by the median value of the studies reviewed by Herrnstein and Murray, and *using the numbers they supply*, is 9 points. Their description of these data goes beyond dubious analysis, beyond irresponsibly selective choice of evidence, to become outright misrepresentation.

In short, the burden of my critique is that the treatment of the question of race, heredity, and IQ in *The Bell Curve* is so selective, eccentric in interpretation, and factually incorrect that it could not be published in any reputable journal. In his article, Mr. Murray responds to these assertions only by attempting to discredit my statement that there is a large literature showing effective intervention with infants which is not subject to the criticisms in the Herrnstein and Murray book, and which shows substantial IQ gains.

Since I give only one example of this literature, Mr. Murray writes as if only one exists. He asserts that the large gains reported for this study did not persist past age three, when IQ's are still unstable, and that the gain at age five had declined to a mere 2.5 points. Once again, he is trying to make the data say what he wants them to say rather than what they actually say. The 2.5 figure refers to the entire sample including an unusual group of very low-birth-weight infants. The near-normal-weight infants in the sample gained 4 to 6 points, or rather retained them because the intervention ended two years before the children were five years old, and the gain was even higher for children born to mothers with little education. These data are highly encouraging and entirely in line with the rest of the literature on normal-weight infants.

Most of your readers will have recognized the shrill and panicked nature of much of the reaction to the Herrnstein and Murray assertions about race and IQ. This is likely to create in any dispassionate person the presumption that that someone's ox is being deservedly gored. The hysterical response to *The Bell Curve* is, in my opinion, the major reason the book is being paid any attention on the question of race and IQ. The scholarly critiques that will be coming out in the years to come will show how terrible the science in the book is. In the meantime, a great deal of damage has been done—to rational policy discussion and to relations of trust between blacks and whites.

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TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . In "'The Bell Curve' and Its Critics," Charles Murray argues that criticisms of the Herrnstein/Murray measure of background effects in the form of a weighted average of the education, occupation, and income of parents (called SES or socioeconomic status) are unfounded. He asserts that he and Herrnstein "deliberately constructed an SES index that uses the same elements that everybody else uses" and "throws down a challenge . . . to come up with another means of measuring the environment."

Readers unfamiliar with the research literature on the effects of social environment on individual achievement may assume that Mr. Murray accurately describes the current state of research in this field. In fact, nothing could be farther from the truth. Measuring social background using only occupation, education, and income of parents characterizes only the earliest studies of the late 1960's and early 1970's. Since then a vast body of work has appeared in the leading academic journals of economics,

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sociology, and child development in which more subtle and sophisticated methods of assessing social-background effects have been put forward. Even a cursory examination of this work would reveal that Mr. Murray's "challenge" to professional social scientists—that we "come up with another means of measuring the environment"—has long since been met.

Characterizing how social environment impacts on individual achievement is a difficult and complex process. A central aspect of this difficulty involves identifying whether or not a particular correlation—say, between a youngster's churchgoing and her subsequent avoidance of early pregnancy—reflects a "causal" relationship, or is merely an artifact of some unmeasured factor which influences both churchgoing and early child-bearing (e.g., intensity of parental supervision). Attention to this kind of difficulty is what separates high-quality professional work in the field from the more pedestrian efforts.

Thus, contrary to Mr. Murray's claim that the book uses the same SES index that everyone uses, the literature of the effects of social background on children's academic achievement has identified a long list of factors which significantly influence the outcomes for children.

These factors include: (1) peer influences in the form of perceived peer education plans; (2) parental expectations and aspirations for their children's schooling; (3) the income and racial composition of the community of origin; (4) the amount of time mothers spend in the labor market; (5) family structure—two parents versus a single parent, and whether parents are separated or divorced; (6) number of siblings and birth order; (7) religious denomination and church attendance; (8) grandparents' schooling; (9) age of the mother at birth; (10) measures of the quality of stimulation found in the home environment, including emotional and verbal responsivity of the mother, provision of appropriate play materials, time and quality of maternal involvement with the child . . . , parental instigation of and participation in intellectual activities, parental affection, rejection, and nurturance . . . etc.; (11) language spoken at home; (12) discussions about college plans with teachers and other school officials; (13) parental emphasis on self-direction versus conformity; (14) ethnicity and immigrant status; (15) parental involvement in school activities; and (16) parental wealth and receipt of welfare income.

This long list is hardly exhaustive. I enumerate at such length only to stress how grossly inaccurate is Mr. Murray's assertion that, by including their simple index of parents' education, occupation, and income, he and Herrnstein were using "what everybody else uses."

A list of the researchers who have contributed to the statistical analysis of various bodies of data in an effort to identify how social background, broadly construed, affects academic achievement would include scores of names and read like a "who's who" of the fields of applied economics, sociology, and child psychology. The same is true of the other dimensions of achievement which Herrnstein and Murray investigate in *The Bell Curve*—poverty, welfare dependency, criminal behavior, parenting effectiveness, etc.

FINALLY, as a professional economist working in this area, I am taken aback by Mr. Murray's insinuation that academic investigation of the effects of social background on offspring's achievement has been somehow stunted by the purported liberal political commitments of researchers in this field. Contrary to Mr. Murray's claims, we do not all think alike. I often find myself at odds with more liberal colleagues on policy questions. What I share with these colleagues, though, are a commitment to using the appropriate techniques of investigation and a reliance on peer review and critique before putting research findings which bear on important matters of policy in the public domain. Reading *The Bell Curve*, and now Mr. Murray's response to his critics, makes me wish that this commitment were more widely shared.

There is a nearly universal consensus among professional analysts who have reviewed Herrnstein and Murray's statistics that they grossly underestimate the relative effect of environment versus intelligence in accounting for individual differences in various dimensions of achievement. It is genuinely puzzling that Herrnstein and Murray failed to include a richer array of background factors in their analysis, since many of these items were unavailable in the data set they employed. Studies now going on and using the same data (e.g., one by Jonathan Crane of the University of Illinois) suggest that these richer measures of social background may account for much of the racial gap in cognitive test scores.

Thus, in his response to critics, Mr. Murray is calling on the experts to do what we have, for many years now, already been doing while leaving us no credible explanation for why he and Richard Herrnstein failed to do it themselves.

LINDA DATCHER LOURY
Tufts University
Medford, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Given the motivations of the critics of *The Bell Curve*, Charles Murray's compendious and lucid response will not silence them. To suggest that individuals and groups may differ in innate abilities, specifically intelligence, and that these differences are not reducible to socioeconomic causes, or entirely malleable, inevitably draws a hysterical response from dogmatic egalitarians who believe that *au fond* all men must be "created equal" in a far more literal sense than Jefferson ever dreamt of. Those in the media, literary intellectuals, and academics accept as common sense the para-Marxist view propagated in sociology courses that life chances differ according to the economic class into which one is born. (Although dead elsewhere, Marxism leads a merry afterlife in academe.) . . .

But *The Bell Curve* proves that life chances depend far more on one's cognitive ability than on one's class and, worse, that cognitive ability is mostly the cause rather than the effect of one's position in life. Class, the wealth or poverty of one's parents, matters far less than one's IQ, which largely (about 60 percent) is an independent variable.

Much of the negative reaction to *The Bell Curve* can be attributed to the fact that its conclusions are inconsistent with what is taught in sociology courses and with what, wittingly or unwittingly, is accepted by most literary intellectuals. It is much easier to repudiate *The Bell Curve* than to part from the egalitarian dogma and notions which hitherto have explained everything.

ERNEST VAN DEN HAAG
New York City, New York

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TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Charles Murray is correct when he states in his article that he and Richard Herrnstein downplayed the evidence for the genetic basis of ethnic/race differences in cognitive ability (including the very high IQ of Jews). They even equivocated on whether the term "race" can be applied to African-Americans who may be more "white" than "black," genetically speaking. . . .

Researchers like me are greatly indebted to *The Bell Curve* (and its critics) for getting the "genie out of the bottle," i.e., the idea that individual and racial differences are due, at least in part, to genetic differences. Human differences can be fully understood only in a wider (evolutionary) context. Such understanding will show why the "American dilemma" is international in scope.

J. PHILIPPE RUSHTON
University of Western Ontario
London, Ontario, Canada

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Charles Murray has once again demonstrated why he is among the most perceptive social scientists and social critics in America today (along with James Q. Wilson and Peter L. Berger). The incredibly hostile reception accorded *The Bell Curve* would have thrown a lesser person into paroxysms of vituperation. Instead, Mr. Murray coolly and clinically diagnoses the causes and foresees some of the consequences of the hysterical treatment his exemplary study has provoked.

The Bell Curve (like its predecessor, *IQ in the Meritocracy*, by Mr. Murray's co-author Richard J. Herrnstein) simply draws inferences from the disparities in intelligence that are readily observable among individuals and groups. That these inferences are not conducive to utopian designs for society is, as Mr. Murray contends, a wholly "modest" finding.

What is so infuriating is the abuse to which Mr. Murray has been subjected. It is one thing to attempt to refute his arguments; quite another to assassinate his character by impugning his motives, sources of funding, and even his high-school pranks of decades ago. I cannot for the life of me understand why some of the most respected scholars in the country stoop to *ad-hominem* attacks. It is one thing for TV talk-show host Phil Donahue to violate elementary canons of civil discourse by accusing Mr. Murray, without any justification, of having been a proto-Nazi in adolescence. It is quite another for Harvard scientist Stephen Jay Gould to make only slightly more sophisticated but equally spurious and damning allegations.

I have watched in despair as Christina Hoff Sommers, Michael Levin, Carol Iannone, Steven Goldberg, Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, Thomas Sowell, and dozens of other first-rate scholars have been vilified for following where evidence and logic lead. Without minimizing their suffering, I would say that Charles Murray has been the subject of an academic inquisition which is without parallel in recent memory. It makes me ashamed of my profession to realize that smear tactics are the weapons of choice in the battle over ideas for people trained and paid to lead a "life of the mind." Truly, in the words of Thomas Jefferson, "I weep for my country when I reflect that God is just."

LLOYD B. LEWIS
Savannah College of Art
and Design
Savannah, Georgia

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I write to corroborate, by way of personal anecdote, Charles Murray's proposition that "the critics of *The Bell Curve* are going to produce the very effects that their attacks have been intended to avert."

Shortly after the book's publication I was invited to attend a lecture at MIT. Neither the topic nor the speaker was specified, but I inferred that the subject was significant and the speaker's reputation weighty along the Cambridge corridor.

I arrived at the overfilled lecture hall with my critical canvas a *tabula rasa*: I knew of Stephen Jay Gould (the speaker, it turned out) only vaguely; I knew of Charles Murray (part of the topic) even more vaguely; I knew of *The Bell Curve* (the balance of the topic) not at all. I was an innocent.

If I harbored any expectation, it was that I would be exposed to reasoned, objective, critical, and informative discourse, based on sound scholarship. What I was exposed to instead was an academic hour of arch, snide, and conclusory attack on a book and its absent authors.

Perhaps with some residual respect for the newly deceased Richard J. Herrnstein, Gould concentrated his sharper *ad-hominem* weapons on Charles Murray. Directly and indirectly Gould made him out to be an intellectual lackey . . . of the far Right, which, . . . to Gould's correct-thinking audience, meant that he and his work were probably infected with racism. In Gould's view, Mr. Murray's scholarship was, of course, flimsy, based on discredited psychometrics, the antediluvian *g*, and the outmoded IQ concept. Using clever innuendo, as well as facial expressions and patronizing chuckles to indicate his far-superior intellect, Gould left little doubt as to the charlatanry of the authors. . . .

At the end of Gould's talk, I felt I had not heard a critical lecture on behavioral science but a sermon on theology, complete with a postmodern edict of excommunication. . . .

In the weeks that followed, the deluge of equally vitriolic reviews directed at *The Bell Curve* confirmed my impression that much more was at work here than the disputation of scholars. What I was witnessing was a *jihad* in which Charles Murray was the infidel. . . .

It has been intellectually refreshing finally to encounter in the pages of COMMENTARY the real Charles Murray rather than a devil-person. I can now explore both sides of a legitimate question Stephen Gould so decidedly intended to remain unexamined.

W.H. RYAN
LaConner, Washington

CHARLES MURRAY writes:

I am grateful for the letters from Ernest van den Haag, J. Philippe Rushton, Lloyd B. Lewis, and W.H. Ryan. But I must pass up further comment on these letters to focus on the critical ones from James J. Heckman, Charles Lane, Leon J. Kamin, Richard E. Nisbett, and Linda Datcher Loury.

In "'The Bell Curve' and Its Critics," I discussed four issues that have been the subject of intense attack: the idea of a general factor of mental ability; the possibility that genes play a part in ethnic IQ differences; the statistical power of the results reported in *The Bell Curve*; and the attempts to raise IQ through program interventions.

James J. Heckman's letter deals primarily with issues involving the general factor of mental ability. "The basic premise of the book," Mr. Heckman writes, "is that *g*—or a single factor of intelligence—explains behavior, and that it is im-

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mutable." But this characterization, which provides the rationale for the criticisms in his letter and for much of his longer critiques of *The Bell Curve* published elsewhere, constitutes a straw man that bears no resemblance to the spirit or content of the book. At no point do the late Richard Herrnstein and I hint that IQ is an all-powerful determinant of behavior, or that IQ is immutable.[1]

Let me offer some examples of our plainly stated view on these issues.

Although we regard intelligence as helping to "explain" behavior in a statistical sense, we repeatedly emphasize how much IQ scores leave unexplained. In the introduction, when we first describe our view of intelligence, we conclude with this passage:

> All of this is another way of making a point so important that we will italicize it now and repeat it frequently throughout the book: *measures of intelligence have reliable statistical relationships with important social phenomena, but they are a limited tool for deciding what to make of any given individual* (p. 21).

On page 68, after displaying a scatterplot of two variables with a correlation of .33, we again put our message in italics to make it hard to miss:

> *For virtually every topic we will be discussing throughout the rest of the book, a plot of the raw data would reveal as many or more exceptions to the general statistical relationship, and this must always be remembered in trying to translate the general rule to individuals.*

And in the introduction to Part II, opening the analyses of the relationship of IQ to social behaviors:

> High cognitive ability is generally associated with socially desirable behaviors, low cognitive ability with socially undesirable ones. "Generally associated with" does not mean "coincident with." For virtually all of the topics we will be discussing, cognitive ability accounts for only small to middling proportions of the variation among people (p. 117).

When Mr. Heckman further writes in his letter that ". . . many skills affect outcomes and not all can be equated with native intelligence," may I suggest that we said exactly the same thing?:

> Perhaps a freshman with an SAT math score of 500 had better not have his heart set on being a mathematician, but if instead he wants to run his own business, become a U.S. Senator, or make a million dollars, he should not put aside those dreams because some of his friends have higher scores. The link between test scores and those achievements is dwarfed by the totality of other characteristics he brings to his life (p. 66).

In the light of such statements, I only wonder how Mr. Heckman, a careful scholar, can write, "Once [the role of many skills] is recognized, a core argument in *The Bell Curve* evaporates."

Mr. Heckman is equally wrong about our position on the immutability of intelligence. In the introduction we state, as one of six general points well-established in the literature, that "IQ scores are stable, although not perfectly so, over much of a person's life," adding immediately that "All six points have an inverse worth noting. For example, some people's scores change a lot . . ." (p. 23). With regard to actual changes in intelligence, we credit the establishment of universal education with having major effects on intelligence (pp. 396–97, 589–592); similarly with adoption at birth (pp. 411-13). With regard to other potential means of changing intelligence, we are more aggressive: "Limitless possibilities for improving intelligence environmentally wait to be uncovered by science. . . . In principle, intelligence can be raised environmentally to unknown limits" (p. 390). This is not the work of authors who believe that intelligence is immutable.

In the last two lines of his letter, Mr. Heckman makes two large statements: first, that one of the measures of intelligence we use is really an achievement test, not a test of mental ability; and second, that it can be manipulated. The test he refers to is the Armed Forces Qualification Test (AFQT).

Concerning the AFQT as a measure of intelligence: all IQ tests are designed for a reference population. In the case of the AFQT, that population is people in their late teens who have been exposed to the American school system. But the fact that items on a test depend on some past education does not necessarily mean that the test is no longer a measure of general intelligence. The brief story, told at length in Appendix 3 of *The Bell Curve*, is that the AFQT is one of the most highly *g*-loaded tests in current use.

Would *The Bell Curve*'s results have been different if we had access to one of the many other standardized mental tests? Unlikely. The AFQT is more highly correlated with other major IQ tests than other major IQ tests are correlated with each other (pp. 584–85).

Can the AFQT scores be manipulated? Yes—on the computer, by econometricians using complex statistical models. What about by school administrators and teachers trying to keep someone in school for another year to raise his AFQT score? Not much; but more on this below.

As for Mr. Heckman's statement that I cite John Carroll's work misleadingly, I can only say that it will come as a surprise to Carroll, who at my request reviewed and approved my citation of his work.

CHARLES LANE, Leon J. Kamin, and Richard Nisbett all weigh in regarding genes and ethnic differences in intelligence.

Mr. Lane is shocked and horrified that I cite scholars who have received funding from the Pioneer Fund. The one paragraph I devoted to the subject in my article was not intended to rebut his allegations but to express my disdain for them. As I have written elsewhere, the attempt to discredit a book at third hand—by tracing the funding history of some of the scholarship it refers to—is a form of McCarthyism. I do not choose that adjective lightly.

In that sense, I also do not care whether Lane's accusations about the history of the Pioneer Fund are true, although I have read enough of the Pioneer Fund's side of the story to doubt them. To me, the key point is that for some decades the Pioneer Fund has given money to legitimate scholars to work on topics of legitimate scientific inquiry, and it makes no attempt whatsoever to influence the course of that work.

As for the sources themselves in *The Bell Curve*, the one criterion Herrnstein and I followed was

[1] A technical correction to Mr. Heckman's statement: we report the role of *g* only once in the main text of the book, with regard to grades in military schools (pp. 76-77). Apart from that, we report the relationship of all the outcome variables to IQ scores, accepting (as apparently Mr. Heckman does) that the general factor, *g*, accounts for the bulk of whatever explanatory power IQ scores have.

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whether the work had scientific merit and was relevant to our presentation. So let us examine Mr. Lane's and Mr. Kamin's charges on that count.

As a preliminary, let me take up Mr. Kamin's complaint about the logic linking African IQ, the legacy of slavery, and African-American IQ, and simply say that the logic he finds objectionable is not ours. Our strategy in Chapter 13 was to answer all the common questions about ethnic differences in intelligence. In the course of writing the book, it quickly became apparent that many people assumed scores of blacks in Africa would be higher than scores of blacks in the U.S., on the theory that colonialism or apartheid was less destructive than the legacy of 250 years of slavery. We did not try to assess the relative oppressiveness of these systems; we simply told readers that such expectations were wrong. African IQ has been found to be substantially lower than African-American IQ.

How valid are the studies that show African scores on mental tests as markedly low? Richard Lynn, a careful scholar who has been the target of almost as much unwarranted criticism as J. Philippe Rushton, converted scores on the existing studies of African cognitive ability to IQ scores, and found that they fall in a range from the 60's to the 80's, with a mean of about 70 and a median of 75.[2] His rationale for converting the scores is defensible but also unnecessary to his argument. One may instead use standard deviations or percentiles to make the same case: the African mean on cognitive tests is in the region of two standard deviations below the white mean, or somewhere below the fifth percentile of the white or European distributions on the same tests.

Might it be, as Mr. Kamin argues, that these studies are invalid because the tests were administered to illiterates, or to Africans who could not be expected to be familiar with culturally specific bits of information? No. The largest and most careful of the studies have sometimes been limited to urban populations, to persons who have graduated from middle school, to students still in school at the secondary level, or to employed persons. Such samples may if anything tend to overestimate, not underestimate, the national mean by overloading the sample with persons who have had the ability and persistence to remain in school or hold jobs.

Many of the best studies have also used Raven's Standard Progressive Matrices (SPM), which is an excellent measure of the nonverbal component of IQ, is highly *g*-loaded, and is not bound by culturally specific information. Does it help to have been in school to do the SPM? Probably—and the samples in the best African studies have been students in school.

To illustrate how troubling the results have been, let me turn to two studies postdating Lynn's review. One, from South Africa, was led by Kenneth Owen (not the study mentioned by Mr. Kamin). The results were published in the refereed British journal, *Personality and Individual Differences.*[3] Its sample consisted of enrolled seventh-grade students and included 1,056 whites, 778 "coloreds" (mixed-race), 1,063 Indians, and 1,093 blacks. The SPM was administered without time limits. Except in the case of the Indians, subjects were tested by school psychologists of the same ethnic group.

Owen presents the full psychometric profile for the test results (distributional characteristics, reliability, item difficulty, item discrimination, congruence coefficients, and discriminant analysis), demonstrating that the test did indeed measure the same thing in each of the various ethnic groups. The discrepancies in mean scores? Expressed in standard deviations, they were as follows: Indian-white: -.52; colored-white: -1.35; black-white: -2.78. This black-white difference is larger than Lynn's earlier estimates.

The second recent study was conducted by a black scholar, Fred Zindi.[4] It took 204 black Zimbabwean pupils and 202 white English students from London inner-city schools and matched them according to age (12–14), sex, and educational level; both samples were "working-class." Despite the fact that the white sample was well below average for whites, with a mean IQ—as measured by the test known as WISC-R—of only 95, the difference between whites and blacks was 1.97 standard deviations on the SPM and 2.36 standard deviations on the WISC-R. Mr. Zindi reported these as IQ's of 72 for the SPM and 67 for the WISC-R—consistent with Lynn's earlier estimates. (There is reason to think that the WISC-R score was somewhat depressed by language considerations, but not much.)

What should one make of these results? Above all, we must proceed cautiously, for the same reasons that guided us in *The Bell Curve.* Our view was that the differences between groups will narrow over time, probably dramatically, as nutrition and the quality of schools improve for black Africans. Changes in black African culture may also provide an environment more conducive to cognitive development among young children. But that does not mean that the current differences, as measured through these samples, are figments of the imagination, or that differences in test scores do not represent real differences in cognitive functioning. They do, and those differences are extremely large, much larger than the differences separating American blacks and whites.

You may choose to believe that Owen is a white racist who wittingly or unconsciously rigged the results, although his scholarly reputation belies it. (Zindi would seem exempt from the same charge.) You may choose to believe that the poor black performance is itself a consequence of colonialism and apartheid and will soon vanish. But these are just assumptions. When data are as carefully collected and analyzed as these, attention must be paid.

Richard E. Nisbett takes a different tack, focusing on studies in the American context. He begins by complaining that Herrnstein and I discussed only one of seven studies that bear on racial ancestry at sufficient length to suit him. We alluded to two others, he acknowledges, but dismissively. Here, however, is our sentence evaluating one of them: "The study is inconclusive but certainly consistent with the suggestion that the B/W [black-white] difference is largely environmental" (p. 310). Of the other, we wrote:

> If the whites who contributed this ancestry were a random sample of

[2] "Race Differences in Intelligence: A Global Perspective," *Mankind Quarterly* 31 (1991), pp. 254-96.

[3] K. Owen, "The Suitability of Raven's Standard Progressive Matrices for Various Groups in South Africa," *Personality and Individual Differences*, 13 (1992), pp. 149-59.

[4] "Differences in Psychometric Performance," *Psychologist*, 7 (1994), pp. 549–54.

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> all whites, then this would be strong evidence of no genetic influence on black-white differences. There is no evidence one way or the other about the nature of the white ancestors (p. 729).

These sentences sound to me like the phrasing of careful social scientists trying to give as much credit to studies as the data warrant. What does Mr. Nisbett find unjustifiably dismissive in either of them?

In his letter, Mr. Nisbett does not cite the remaining four studies, but in his article in *The Bell Curve Wars* he cites studies from before 1975 that are also discussed in a book by John Loehlin, Gardner Lindzey, and J.N. Spuhler.[5] Here is what we said about these studies in *The Bell Curve*:

> Several smaller studies bearing on racial ancestry and IQ were well summarized almost two decades ago by Loehlin, Lindzey, and Spuhler. They found the balance of evidence tipped toward some sort of mixed gene-environment explanation of the B/W difference without saying how much of the difference is genetic and how much environmental.

If Mr. Nisbett is going to claim that we misled our readers by skipping over literature we did not like, he must show that we misrepresented Loehlin, Lindzey, and Spuhler's review of the evidence; or that their conclusions were themselves wrong; or that some decisive change in their evaluation has been prompted by subsequent work. He does none of these things, instead offering a one-sentence summary of the (unspecified) literature. I submit that our one-sentence summary is more balanced and prudent than his. Interested readers with access to a university library can look up Loehlin, Lindzey, and Spuhler, Chapter 5, and decide for themselves.

Mr. Nisbett is correct, however, in saying that we devote most of our attention to one study, known as the Minnesota Transracial Adoption Study. Why? Because the Minnesota Transracial Adoption Study was for more than a decade Exhibit No.-1 for optimists on the nature of black-white differences, and was widely cited as close-to-definitive empirical proof that such differences in intelligence were environmental.

As it happens, the early data from the Minnesota Transracial Adoption Study were not as unambiguously positive as they were often reported to be in the press.[6] At age seven, the scores of the black adoptees were below those of the white adoptees, and even further below those of white biological children of the adoptive parents. Still, the mean of the black and interracial adoptees was 106; which was not only higher than the Minnesota black mean of about 89 but higher than the national white mean. This was good news by any standard.

In the late 1980's, however, when the same children were tested in adolescence, the IQ means were as follows: 109 for the biological children of white parents; 106 for the adopted white children; 99 for the adopted children with one black biological parent; and 89 for the adopted children with two black biological parents.[7] As we put it in the book: "The bottom line is that the gap between the adopted children with two black parents and the adopted children with two white parents was 17 points, in line with the B/W difference customarily observed" (p. 310). This is bad news by any standard.

If the national black-white difference is in the region of 15 points, and if, after growing up in white homes, adopted black children still are just as far behind, then the first, parsimonious explanation of such differences must be that they are largely genetic. I have no problem with the attempt of the authors of the Minnesota study to search for alternative, environmental explanations for the results, which Mr. Nisbett cites enthusiastically. Thus, when those authors—Richard Weinberg, Sandra Scarr, and Irwin Waldman—came to offer conclusions, they wrote:

> The results of the longitudinal follow-up continue to support the view that the social environment maintains a dominant role in determining the average IQ of black and interracial children and that both social and genetic variables contribute to individual variations among them (p. 133).

Other scholars argue (as Herrnstein and I thought) that Weinberg, Scarr, and Waldman retreated too far from parsimony, trying too hard to squeeze the last ounce out of an environmental explanation. But here is the key point: this is an ordinary scholarly difference of opinion, bounded by common agreement. Weinberg, Scarr, and Waldman acknowledge that their data indicate that *some* genetic component is probably involved—as indeed their data make it very hard to deny.

I have rehearsed the African IQ data and the Minnesota Transracial Adoption data at such length because, in the letters printed above as in the published reviews of *The Bell Curve*, our discussion of the possibility of genetic racial differences in intelligence has been attacked so relentlessly. What has all the fuss been about? Let me, for the umpteenth time, repeat our concluding paragraph here:

> If the reader is now convinced that either the genetic or environmental explanation has won out to the exclusion of the other, we have not done a sufficiently good job of presenting one side or the other. It seems highly likely to us that both genes and environment have something to do with racial differences. What might the mix be? We are resolutely agnostic on that issue; as far as we can determine, the evidence does not yet justify an estimate (p. 311).

At present, this is the scientifically prudent position.

ONE final aspect of the black-white difference is raised by Mr. Nisbett, who claims that I continue to refer to a black-white gap of 15 IQ points while our own account in *The Bell Curve* reveals a median current gap of only 9 IQ points. "Herrnstein and Murray's description of these data goes beyond dubious analysis, beyond irresponsibly selective choice of evidence, to become outright misrepresentation of a state of affairs."

Mr. Nisbett has it exactly wrong. Far from ignoring evidence of convergence, Herrnstein and I were, if anything, guilty of downplaying important evidence that the current black-white gap is not closing at all but diverging, and that the actual

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[5] *Race Differences in Intelligence*. (W.H. Freeman, 1975).

[6] S. Scarr and R.A. Weinberg, "IQ Test Performance of Black Children Adopted by White Families," *American Psychologist*, 31 (1976), pp. 726-39.

[7] R.A. Weinberg, S. Scarr, and I.D. Waldman, "The Minnesota Transracial Adoption Study: A Follow-Up of IQ Test Performance at Adolescence," *Intelligence*, 16 (1992), pp. 117-35.

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current gap is not just 15 points, but some larger figure.

Mr. Nisbett's use of a 9-point gap comes from our review of recent IQ test data (pp. 289–90) as reported in an article by Ken Vincent.[8] There, Vincent argued that studies of children in the 1980's indicate a smaller difference than is observed among adults. But (a familiar story) the studies Vincent used are beset by problems of interpretation: unrepresentative samples, results that in the technical literature are said to be artifactual, and, in five of the studies, a control for socioeconomic background that is guaranteed to reduce the black-white difference by about 40 percent. Nonetheless, we called Vincent's evidence encouraging, as indeed it is.

But another, much larger source of data on the black-white difference among today's children, not used by Vincent, is also available. Every two years since 1986, the children of the women in the National Longitudinal Study of Youth (NLSY) have been tested on the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, a nationally normed and widely used measure of child IQ. When we wrote *The Bell Curve*, we had access to the data through the 1990 testing cycle. We alluded to it at the end of our review of Vincent's data, and presented the actual numbers in Chapter 15. Restricting the comparison to pairs of mothers and children who had been tested, we reported the gap separating the black and white mothers as 13.2 IQ points, while the gap separating the children was 17.5 points. We also said that "There are technical reasons to hedge on any more specific interpretation of these data" (p. 356).

I have looked since then at the data through the 1992 testing cycle. The same trend persists, even after correcting for the ways in which current samples are unrepresentative. Nor should it be surprising that the NLSY is yielding these results. They are consistent with the expectations one may draw from the national birth data, which show a marked black-white divergence in births based on educational level of the mother (which in turn has a reliable correlation with maternal IQ).

There are still reasons to hedge on what will eventually happen to the black-white difference, but the notion that the balance of the data demonstrates a brighter future, let alone only a 9-point difference, ignores reality. *The Bell Curve*'s summary of the situation struck the right note, I think:

> Many of you will be wondering why we have felt it necessary to qualify the good news [on convergence of scores]. A smaller number of readers who specialize in mental testing may be wondering why we have given so much prominence to educational achievement trends and a scattering of IQ results that may be psychometrically ephemeral. The answer for everyone is that predicting the future on this issue is little more than guesswork at this point. We urge upon our readers a similar suspension of judgment (p. 295).

In "'The Bell Curve' and Its Critics," I argued that the book undermined the importance of socioeconomic background (SES) as an explanation for social outcomes. Linda Datcher Loury takes me to task for not acknowledging a large and expanding literature on the many factors other than traditional measures of SES that are known to affect such outcomes.

Her criticism is not without merit, but also not entirely on point. I did not argue that no one has explored other factors. I pointed out, rather, that (1) SES has for many years been a staple in academic analyses of why children of some families become poor, why they drop out of school, why they commit crimes, etc.; (2) a major purpose of *The Bell Curve* was to add IQ to this standard set of explanatory variables; (3) our use of SES has come in for much frivolous criticism; and (4) *The Bell Curve* has diminished the persuasiveness of the role of SES in explaining social problems. Nothing in Mrs. Loury's letter disputes the last three points. As for the first, does she really want to contend that in academic treatments of poverty, welfare, crime, and other social pathologies discussed in Part II of *The Bell Curve*, socioeconomic background has not (along with racism) been the dominant explanatory construct since the 1960's?

But Mrs. Loury is quite right that I should have acknowledged the growing literature on other explanatory variables. When I write about this issue in the future, I will amend my presentation accordingly.

The final topic in my article was my prediction that the attacks on *The Bell Curve* will backfire by forcing policy-makers to confront just how difficult it is to make substantial, long-term improvements in cognitive functioning. As promised earlier, I will now return to this point.

Here, again, Herrnstein and I are accused of dismissing studies we did not dismiss. In this case, Richard Nisbett cites two studies of intervention in infancy, "both of which had very positive results but which they reject on methodological grounds." He refers to the Milwaukee Project and the Abecedarian Project. This, to be tiresome about it, is what we actually wrote:

> In summary, the two experiments contain some promising leads. But it is not obvious where to go from here, for they differed in possibly important ways. The Abecedarian Project evaluated day care; the Milwaukee Project provided numerous interventions besides day care, including parental payment and training. It is hard to tell whether the former found enduring IQ benefits, given the very early divergence in test scores for experimental and control groups, but it found some academic benefits; the latter found an enduring IQ gain, but it has not yet shown comparable intellectual gains in school work (p. 409).

This is what he calls a rejection? Is he prepared to claim more for these two projects than we did?

Mr. Nisbett also asserts that we "ignore a dozen studies not subject to such [methodological] criticisms but having results consistent with the two they reject." Once again he has wrongly accused us of ignoring studies that we covered, in this case using the respected synthesis of the literature conducted by the Consortium for Longitudinal Studies.[9] Overall, the Consortium found about a 7-point gain in the exit test for such interventions, a gain that faded out within a few years. In the end, concluded the Consortium, "The effect of early education on intelligence test scores was not permanent."

In the next part of his letter

[8] "Black/White IQ Differences: Does Age Make the Difference?," *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 47 (1991), pp. 266-70.

[9] I. Lazar and R. Darlington, "Lasting Effects of Early Education: A Report From the Consortium for Longitudinal Studies," *Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development*, 47 (1982), pp. 2-3 (Serial No. 195).

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Mr. Nisbett refers to a variety of interventions that conflate improvements in educational instruction and achievement (which neither Herrnstein nor I would dispute) with improvements in cognitive ability. This distinction is crucial, however. Do we know how to take a set of youngsters with a given tested IQ and reliably improve their educational achievement? Yes. Do we know how to take a set of youngsters with a given tested IQ that would not (for example) allow them to become engineers, and reliably raise their cognitive functioning so that they can become engineers? No. Do we know how to *sustain* gains in IQ if we sustain the enriched curriculum? Mr. Nisbett says that we do. In my article, I observed that we have no credible study offering evidence of significant, long-term effects on cognitive functioning that Herrnstein and I did not consider in *The Bell Curve*. I am still waiting for a citation. Mr. Nisbett offers none.

I grant that he is one-twelfth correct when he complains of the dozen studies we failed to consider in *The Bell Curve*. The eight-site study he mentions, in which preschool, social, and pediatric services were supplied to low-birthweight (less than 2,500 grams) infants, postdates the Consortium's analysis, and we did indeed fail to include it. Mr. Nisbett's citation of it tells an instructive story.

In his article in *The Bell Curve Wars*, Mr. Nisbett had pointed to a follow-up of this study, published in 1992, claiming that the infants had gained an average of 9 IQ points at age three. More accurately, the study administered two IQ tests. Mr. Nisbett mentioned only the one showing a 9.4-point gain. The other showed a 6.4-point gain. I pointed out in my May COMMENTARY article that there was also a *subsequent* follow-up, published in 1994, which showed those gains dropping to near-zero.

Let us pursue this issue just a little further. The 1994 follow-up, published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* (JAMA), also broke down the results according to whether the babies were "lighter LBW [low birth weight]," meaning less than 2,000 grams, or "heavier LBW" (2,001–2,500 grams).[10] In that comparison, the heavier LBW group showed an advantage over the control group of 6.0 IQ points on one test and 3.7 points on the other IQ test, as Mr. Nisbett now says. I could stop here: this is precisely the kind of gain—modest in size, showing a decline over time—that Herrnstein and I described as characteristic of the literature. But there is more. Mr. Nisbett neglects to mention that the lighter LBW sample, just as much a part of the study as the heavier LBW sample, showed no effect at all from this ambitious attempt to help them.

Now, imagine that Richard Herrnstein and I had found a study of children that showed the results we "wanted" at age three, and reported them in *The Bell Curve* for the entire sample. Suppose we ignored the already-published results from a follow-up at age five which contradicted those results. Suppose we then responded to criticism of our presentation by focusing on a subsample of subjects at age five who still showed the "wanted" results, saying that *this* was the meaningful sample, ignoring the subsample that showed no effect. Had we done any of that Mr. Nisbett would have been entirely correct in charging us with playing fast and loose with the interpretation of data. But he is the one who has done each of those things, not Herrnstein and Murray in *The Bell Curve* or Murray in COMMENTARY.

Mr. Nisbett writes, "Mr. Murray is trying to make the data say what he wants them to say." I ask the reader to judge whether, given all the results I have just described, I was correct when I wrote in my article: "The only study in 'the very large literature' that we missed does not contradict our conclusion that such interventions have provided promising leads but no more."

IT IS appropriate to close with this episode because it characterizes the nature of far too many of the attacks on *The Bell Curve*. I am happy to report that since I wrote "'The Bell Curve' and Its Critics," I have begun to see the first examples of the kind of tough but collegial criticism which Richard Herrnstein and I had hoped for. That said, I still find the most frightening part of the *The Bell Curve* experience to be not the frenzied reaction in the popular media, but the intellectual irresponsibility of so many of the book's academic critics.

[10] J. Brooks-Gunn, *et al.*, "Early Intervention in Low-Birth-Weight Premature Infants," *JAMA*, 272 (1994), pp. 1257-1262.

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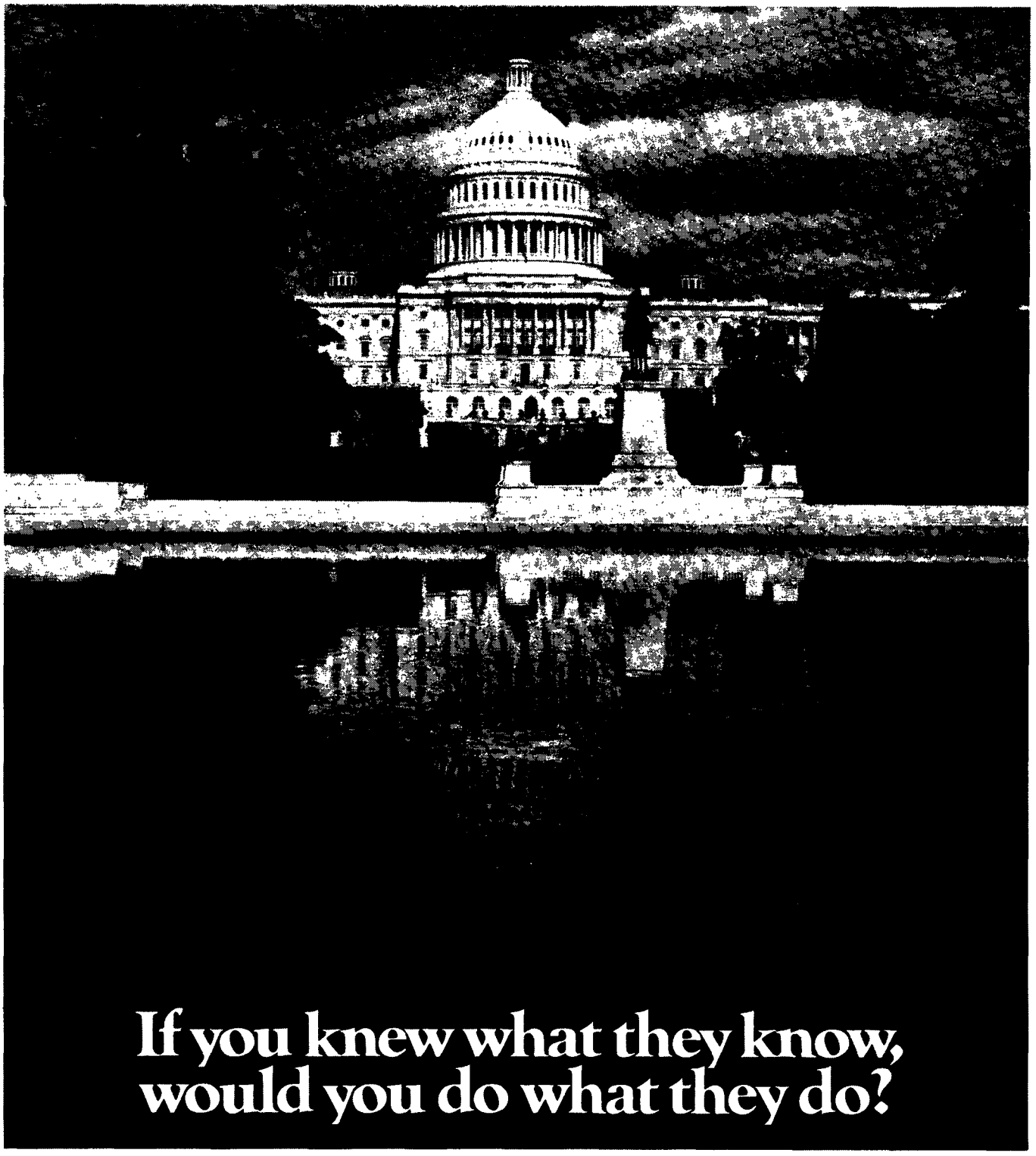

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In the Matter of Pat Robertson

Norman Podhoretz

Is Pat Robertson guilty of the charge of anti-Semitism that has lately been hurled at him?

It is an important question, with much more riding on it than Robertson's personal reputation alone. He is, after all, one of the most prominent Protestant preachers in America, commanding a huge daily audience on a cable-TV network (the Christian Broadcast Network, or CBN) which he himself owns. He is also the creator of and the moving spirit behind the American Center for Law and Justice, the most prominent of the various groups that have sprung up in the past few years to fight in the courts for a less restrictive interpretation of what the First Amendment permits by way of religious expression in "the public square." Finally, and most consequentially, he is the founder of the Christian Coalition, a political organization whose influence within the Republican party, and especially its newly dominant conservative wing, has grown by leaps and bounds; and though Robertson has turned over the running of the organization to his young protégé, Ralph Reed, he remains its titular head and retains a deciding voice in its councils.

If, then, given his centrality, Robertson really is an anti-Semite, it would suggest that the conservative Christian community is still infected at its very heart with this ancient disease and is still as dangerous to Jews as many of them viscerally fear.

The most broadly based statement of the case for regarding Robertson as an anti-Semite has been made by the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) in the controversial report it issued last year under the title *The Religious Right: The Assault on Tolerance & Pluralism in America.** More recently the indictment has been rehashed and extended by Michael Lind in the *New York Review of Books*, where a follow-up piece by Jacob Heilbrunn containing additional documentation has also appeared.

It is, on the face of it, a very strong case. Robertson has singled out "cosmopolitan, liberal, secular Jews" who want "unrestricted freedom for smut and pornography and the murder of the unborn," and he has attacked them for their participation in the "ongoing attempt to undermine the public strength of Christianity." He has also repeatedly warned Jews in threatening tones of "a Christian backlash of major proportions":

> The part that Jewish intellectuals and media activists have played in the assault on Christianity may very possibly prove to be a grave mistake. . . . For centuries, Christians have supported the dream of Zion, and they have supported Jews in their dream of a national homeland. But American Jews invested great energy in attacking these very allies. That investment may pay a terrible dividend.

Again, referring in italics to the "*outcry against a Roman Catholic Carmelite convent established in a building which has been standing outside the walls of Auschwitz,*" Robertson has asked: "*What perversity would lead a small embattled minority to begin highly publicized efforts all over the world to enrage and alienate the largest bodies within the 1.8-billion-member Christian religion?*" And in a similar vein Robertson has declared (with the italics once more coming from him):

> It is obviously one thing *to ensure that the horrors of the Holocaust are never repeated again.* It is equally obvious that *any group should defend itself against bigotry and oppression. . . .* However, it is quite another thing for a strident minority within a minority of only 5,000,000 to regard the expression of the *deeply held beliefs of the majority as so repugnant that it undertakes the systematic vilification, weakening, and ultimate suppression of the majority point of view* from society.

Then there is Robertson's best-selling book of 1991, *The New World Order*, which is only touched upon briefly in the ADL report but forms the main subject of the much longer, more detailed, and more damning exposé by Lind in the *New York Review*. In that book Robertson subscribes to a crackpot theory according to which bankers like the Rothschilds, Paul Warburg, and Jacob Schiff were major players in a centuries-old but still active conspiracy to take over the world. To be sure, Robertson goes out of his way to avoid identifying these people as Jews; he calls them Germans or Europeans. But every once in a while the

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* See the discussion by Midge Decter in "The ADL vs. the Religious Right" (Commentary, September 1994).

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cat slips out of the bag, as when he traces the link between the Rothschilds and the occult sect with which the conspiracy originated in the 18th century:

> That same year, 1782, the headquarters of Illuminated Freemasonry moved to Frankfurt, a center controlled by the Rothschild family. It is reported that in Frankfurt Jews were for the first time admitted to the order of Freemasons. If indeed members of the Rothschild family or their close associates were polluted by the occultism of . . . Illuminated Freemasonry, we may have discovered the link between the occult and the world of high finance. . . . New money suddenly poured into the Frankfurt lodge, and from there a well-funded plan for world revolution was carried forth.

IN RESPONSE to the recent charges against him, Robertson has vehemently denied that in speaking of European bankers, he is actually talking about the Jews:

> I deeply regret that anyone in the Jewish community believes that my description of international bankers and use of the phrase "European bankers" in my book refers to Jews. . . . I have never intentionally used what some would describe as code words to portray Jewish business interests. I condemn and repudiate in the strongest terms those who would use such code words as a cover for anti-Semitism.

The evident sincerity of this protestation raises the possibility that Robertson is unaware of the anti-Semitic provenance of some of the ideas to which he subscribes in *The New World Order*. Now as it happens, several decades ago I myself gave the novelists Truman Capote and Gore Vidal the benefit of precisely such a doubt when they began complaining that Jews had come to dominate the American literary world and were using their power to promote one another while excluding everyone else (except, in Vidal's wisecrack, for an occasional "OK *goy*"). This was a notion bearing a striking resemblance to the charge that had been made by anti-Semites in Vienna and Berlin in the 1920's and that had then been taken up by the Nazis. Nevertheless, I said, the taboo on the open expression of hostility toward Jews since the fall of Hitler had been so effective that Vidal and Capote, like almost everyone else in America under a certain age, were in all probability unfamiliar with the traditional ideologies of anti-Semitism; and it was this very ignorance that had emboldened them to spread an idea they would have been ashamed to embrace if they had known of its history and pedigree.

I still think this may have been true of Capote, but I learned to know better about Vidal,* and I am wary of making the same mistake again in the case of Robertson. Sincere though his disavowal strikes me, there is no blinking the fact that some of the sources on which he relies in *The New World Order* (including books by Eustace Mullins and Nesta Webster) are blatantly anti-Semitic.†

Of course it may well be that Robertson has never actually read those books and that the material he draws from them was supplied without context by a research assistant. Interestingly, Heilbrunn cites several examples of passages from Mullins and Webster either quoted or paraphrased by Robertson from which the explicit references to Jews have been eliminated. If Robertson did that himself, it would mean that he was fully aware of the anti-Semitic character of his sources and still accepted them as credible. But even if a research assistant or ghost writer did it, these passages give off an unmistakable whiff of anti-Semitism that Robertson really should have been able to detect.

The conclusion is thus inescapable that Robertson, whether knowingly or unknowingly, has subscribed to and purveyed ideas that have an old and well-established anti-Semitic pedigree.

YET everyone, even Robertson's most dogged prosecutors, recognizes that there is more to the story than that. For if Robertson is an anti-Semite, he is a most peculiar one. As the columnist Don Feder (an Orthodox Jew) notes:

> Pat Robertson must be an entirely new breed of anti-Semite—an anti-Semite who invited an Orthodox rabbi to address his convention, has a legal-action arm that filed an *amicus* brief in support of hasidic Jews, and employs a Jew as his chief lobbyist.

But what to my mind is even more significant and more telling, this "new breed of anti-Semite" has also been one of the staunchest defenders of Israel in America. Even *The New World Order* itself, for all its anti-Semitic baggage, is peppered with friendly references to Israel; and in constructing his argument against the idea of world government (which he sees as literally inspired by Satan), Robertson makes a special point of the danger it poses to Israel:

> Rest assured that the next objective of the presently constituted new world order, under the present United Nations, will be to make Israel its target. . . . A recalcitrant nation whose action does not accord with United Nations policy may be disciplined by military force.

On top of his fervent political support of Israel, Robertson has donated large sums of money to Jewish causes and organizations (hundreds of thousands of dollars just to help Russian-Jewish

* The whole story is told in my article, "The Hate That Dare Not Speak Its Name," in the November 1986 issue of COMMENTARY.

† Prodded by Lind's article, I have read Robertson's *The New World Order*, and though I have not subjected myself to a first-hand acquaintance with Mullins and Webster, the many quotations dug up from their works by Jacob Heilbrunn speak loudly and clearly for themselves.

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émigrés alone, as the ADL report acknowledges). Here is how he describes all this himself in replying to the charges of anti-Semitism that have been leveled against him:

> On Christmas Day 1974, at the height of the Arab oil embargo, I interviewed then-Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in his office in Jerusalem. That night, while looking out on the Temple Mount, I thought of this tiny nation so isolated and vulnerable. Then I vowed to God that whatever happened, however unpopular the task, I and the organization I controlled would stand with Israel and the Jewish people.
>
> I have kept that vow. In the mid-1970's, I publicly denounced the United Nations resolution equating Zionism with racism. I have personally lobbied the governments of the U.S. and Britain against the introduction of high-performance armaments in the Middle East against Israel. The Christian Broadcasting Network has contributed generously to the United Jewish Appeal. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, we have also provided financial support for Operation Exodus, a resettlement effort of Russian Jews. For eight years, our affiliate humanitarian organization, Operation Blessing, has sent scores of Jewish children on *Aliyah* to learn about Jewish culture in Israel.

Michael Lind, Frank Rich (who has turned his column in the *New York Times* into an echo chamber for Lind's article), and a number of others have compared Robertson to the Black Muslim leader Louis Farrakhan, presumably because both subscribe to off-the-wall conspiracy theories involving the Jews. But the comparison is intellectually absurd and morally outrageous. Farrakhan attacks Israel while Robertson defends it; and whereas Farrakhan calls Judaism a "gutter religion," Robertson speaks throughout *The New World Order* with the greatest respect of the faith of "the God of Jacob."

None of this cuts any ice with Robertson's critics, and neither are they in the least impressed with his fervent denial that he is an anti-Semite. Farrakhan, too, they rightly point out, denies that he is an anti-Semite; and so, I would add, do Gore Vidal on the Left and the political commentators Pat Buchanan and Joseph Sobran on the Right.

But consider the differences here. When Buchanan was charged with anti-Semitism, he answered with a snarl, defiantly refusing to "retract a single word" of the offensive things he had written about Israel and its Jewish friends in America.* Sobran's response to the same charge was to become even more offensive and more openly anti-Semitic.† Over on the Left, Vidal adopted the strategy of heaping abuse on his critics and casting blame back on them for arousing anti-Semitism; and in another part of the forest, Farrakhan "demonstrated" that he was not anti-Semitic by getting out his violin and playing the Mendelssohn concerto.

BY CONTRAST, Robertson could and did offer the powerful rejoinder just quoted above, and he could point as well to earlier statements condemning anti-Semitism which there could be no suspicion of his having been pushed by Jewish pressure into making. Thus, for example in his book, *The New Millennium* (1990), in a chapter entitled "The Rise of Anti-Semitism," which expressed anxiety over a "a rising tide of anti-Jewish feeling the world over," he wrote: "Intolerance in any quarter is wrong, but inasmuch as we are able, we must ensure that the trend throughout the 1990's remains in favor of a Jewish homeland in Israel and not for the elimination of the Jews."

In a typically smart-alecky piece in the *New Republic*, Michael Kinsley—the same Michael Kinsley whose sharp eye was conveniently unable to spot any anti-Semitism in the writings of his television partner Pat Buchanan—makes easy fun of this sentence through "close textual analysis." But clumsily written though the sentence is, the fact remains that it clearly reaffirms a determination to fight for the survival of Israel against all who wish to destroy it—something, to put it mildly, that neither Buchanan nor Sobran nor Vidal nor Farrakhan has ever done (and anyone in search of a good laugh might try to imagine any of those people giving money to the United Jewish Appeal).

Since Robertson's support of Israel is undeniable, the usual tactic of those who wish to convict him of anti-Semitism is to denigrate that support by explaining that in his apocalyptic theology, the return of the Jews to the Promised Land is a necessary prelude to the second coming of Jesus and their ultimate conversion to Christianity. But surely in politics it is actions and not motives that count. And in any event, since Jews do not share Robertson's belief in Jesus, why should they worry about what he thinks will happen after the second coming, in which they also do not believe?

In *The Real Anti-Semitism in America*, a book written in 1982 in collaboration with his wife Ruth, the late Nathan Perlmutter took up the question being raised even then as to whether the friendship of Christian fundamentalists for Israel was "nothing more than a patiently played conversion ploy." Perlmutter, who was national director of the ADL—an ADL rather different from the one of today—did not think that the Christian Right was leading an "assault on tolerance and pluralism in America," and his way of looking at the theological underpinnings of its support for Israel is still relevant:

> Fundamentalists do indeed interpret Scripture as predicting the messiah risen when Jews are

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* A detailed account can be found in "Patrick J. Buchanan and the Jews" by Joshua Muravchik in COMMENTARY, January 1991.

† The story of Sobran is also told in "The Hate That Dare Not Speak Its Name."

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returned to Israel and in time promising the acceptance by Jews of Jesus Christ. It is neither our intention to be flippant nor disrespectful when we say, When that day comes, we'll see. Meanwhile, however, we need all the friends we have to support Israel. . . . If the messiah comes, on that very day we'll consider our options. Meanwhile, let's praise the Lord and pass the ammunition.

SO MUCH for the doubt cast by Robertson's critics on the value of his support of Israel. But what about his attacks on Jews in present-day America? The ADL report cites these attacks without further argument as more evidence of anti-Semitism, and many would just as easily agree. Yet the case is not quite so clear-cut as all that. For unlike his paranoid historical fantasies about Jewish bankers (and unlike his equally paranoid conception of how the Establishment in America works today, not to mention his demented estimate of the power wielded by the Council on Foreign Relations and the Trilateral Commission), the substance of what Robertson says about the Jewish community in contemporary America is on the whole accurate and within the bounds of fair comment.

After all, it is the simple truth that most American Jews are liberals (about 75 percent, if their voting behavior is taken as the yardstick) and that, as such, they have lined up behind policies that are repugnant to the conservative Christian community. Indeed, from the veritably religious passion many Jews have lately invested in the currently most fashionable of these causes, one might think that the only commandments Moses brought down from Sinai were "Thou shalt not oppose abortion" and "Thou shalt not oppose gay rights."

Furthermore, groups like the American Civil Liberties Union, which are not, strictly speaking, Jewish but whose most visible spokesmen are often of Jewish origin, have also taken the lead in the fight against efforts to control the unrestricted spread of pornography, while organizations like the American Jewish Congress, explicitly claiming to speak in the name of the community, have been in the forefront of the campaign to enforce an interpretation of the First Amendment that would bar any and all religious expression from the public square. The result of such efforts, writes Judge Robert H. Bork, is that

> The Ten Commandments are banned from the schoolroom, but pornographic videos are permitted. Or, as someone has quipped about the notorious sculpture by Andres Serrano, a crucifix may not be exhibited—unless it is dipped in urine, in which case it will be awarded a grant by the National Endowment for the Arts.

Far from concealing or making light of all this, liberal Jews are proud of it, often congratulating themselves on their great contribution to the liberal movement. They even link their commitment to that movement directly with the prophetic tradition and the moral imperatives of Judaism, to which they are convinced they are being loyal in being liberal.

By what right then is the cry of anti-Semitism raised when someone like Robertson targets them for criticism? Can it honestly be claimed that Robertson is wrong when he accuses secular liberal Jews of fighting "to undermine the public strength of Christianity"? Is he lying when he charges that "Jewish intellectuals and media activists" have ridiculed and vilified the religious beliefs of the Christian majority, and especially of the fundamentalists?

These questions answer themselves, but they still leave open the issue of Robertson's threatening tone—and here I think he deserves to be castigated. He has every right to criticize Jews for taking positions he considers immoral and dangerous and to characterize those positions in the most unflattering terms. But in resorting to intimidation, as he for all practical purposes does when he warns of a Christian backlash against this "strident minority," he lends credibility to and reinforces the fear that Christian fundamentalism still inspires in many Jews and that helps account for their stubborn adherence to some of the very policies against which he inveighs.

It is a genuine fear with a great deal of history behind it (a history, incidentally, that Robertson sometimes seems unaware of, as when he claims that "for centuries" Christians "have supported Jews in their dream of a national homeland"), and it is kept alive by the talk about America as a "Christian nation" that is occasionally heard among evangelical Protestants.

But if it is true that Robertson's threatening tone feeds this fear, it is also true that he has at the same time tried to dispel it by vigorously and unequivocally affirming his dedication to the separation of church and state:

> Despite claims to the contrary, I have never suggested or even imagined any type of political action to make America a "Christian nation." While it should never mean that religious ideals and ideas are to be excluded from political discourse, I agree that church and state should be separated because the separation of church and state is good for religion, religious institutions, and the religious liberty of believers.

And for good measure he adds:

> These are not merely words of acquiescence to the acrimonious writings of a few—they are the enunciation of my most personal beliefs and my most fundamental convictions.

It goes without saying that Robertson's conception of what separation entails is not the same as the one held by most Jews, on—to take only the

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most neuralgic controversy of the present political moment—the matter of prayer in school. But here I must confess to a blind spot, since this issue, which exercises the passions of so many people on both sides, strikes me as of little importance one way or the other.

In my opinion, Christians are sadly mistaken if they think that saying a prayer will immunize their children against the influence of the lesson they will immediately afterward be given in the classroom next door on how to use condoms. On the other hand, Jews may well be justified in worrying that their children will feel excluded if prayer is reinstituted in the schools; there is much testimony to this effect from Jews who grew up in small towns in the South and the Midwest. Yet I can offer conflicting testimony from having gone to a public school in Brooklyn in the 30's. Every morning in that school we sang a hymn that concluded with the words, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty,/ God in three persons, blessed trinity." It is hard for me to accept that singing these words made any impact on us, since neither I nor my classmates (a mixed bunch of Jews, Italians, and blacks, all with parents relatively fresh from Eastern Europe, Sicily, or the American South) had the slightest idea of what they meant. It was only as an adult, when I chanced to hear the hymn sung somewhere, that I realized to my astonishment—and amusement—what I had been belting out every day for so many years.

SETTING my own perhaps idiosyncratic experience aside, and granting that the Jewish fear of Christian fundamentalism is genuine and understandable, the question I would ask is whether it is a realistic fear in the America of today—an America in which, to borrow an observation from Irving Kristol, Christians seem more interested in marrying Jews than in persecuting them.

Certainly—and I have the hate mail to prove it—anti-Semitism still exists on the Christian Right (as it also does on the Christian Left, where it is usually disguised as anti-Zionism). Yet close observers of the conservative Christian world tell us that the dominant trend in recent years has been in the opposite direction—toward the repudiation of anti-Semitism and, as Father Richard John Neuhaus puts it, toward a new "understanding of Christianity's dependence upon Judaism." Neuhaus is speaking not only of "the Judaism of what Christians call the Old Testament, but the living Judaism that continues in mysterious relation to God's election and unbreakable promise."

With a rather better sense of the historical record than Robertson's, Neuhaus readily concedes that this new understanding by Christians has "slight precedent in the two millennia of interaction between Jews and Christians." But he assures us that it is real, that it is spreading both among Roman Catholics and among evangelical Protestants, and that it bodes well for the security of American Jews:

> All too obviously, there have been predominantly Christian societies in which Jews have been anything but secure. But the argument is that Christianity in America really is different, that it has internalized the imperatives of tolerance as a matter of religious duty, and that, more recently, it has come to see Judaism as an integral part of God's purposes in history.

If Neuhaus is right—and my own contacts with the conservative Christian world tend to confirm his diagnosis—Jews as Jews have little cause to worry about the growing influence of the Christian Right. But liberals are another matter; and to the extent that Jews are liberals, they have every reason to be deeply troubled about a movement that has dedicated itself to undoing many of the things they have supported—and, to repeat, are proud to have supported—in the past 30 years.

Since many Jews have great difficulty in distinguishing between Judaism and liberalism, they also seem unable to detect any difference between anti-Semitism and the anti-liberal Christian conservatism of a Pat Robertson. Some of Robertson's accusers, however, are less confused than devious, rather like the woman in the Yiddish saying who tries to get away with criticizing her daughter-in-law by pretending to be talking about the girl's mother (*zi zogt di shviger, zi meynt di shnir*).

For instance, Michael Lind (who is not Jewish) is undoubtedly more exercised by Robertson's cultural agenda—and most of all his opposition to gay rights and abortion—than by his fantasies about Jewish bankers in the 18th century. But in the campaign Lind has joined to stigmatize the Christian Right as fascist, concentrating on those fantasies has turned out to be a far more effective weapon than focusing on issues that are not (at least not outside liberal circles) self-evidently incriminating.

FOR Lind, playing the anti-Semitism card has brought another and not so incidental benefit. Until quite recently this energetic and prolific young intellectual from Texas was a member of the conservative camp. After graduating from Yale he had gone to work for William F. Buckley, Jr. and then Irving Kristol, and most of the writing he did was published in magazines like *National Review*, *National Interest*, *Public Interest*, and COMMENTARY. But by his own account, he had become more and more unhappy over the surprising willingness of his intellectual patrons and mentors to associate and cooperate with members of the conservative Christian community. They claimed to be doing so because they

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had come to see that community as a valuable ally in the effort to halt and perhaps even reverse the moral decline of American society. But the only threat of moral decline Lind could see in America came from the Christian Right itself, which wanted to roll back all the wonderful gains made by the gay-rights and feminist movements. Indeed, to him the Christian Right represented nothing but the redneck repressiveness of the incipiently fascist culture from which he himself had fled and against which he had expected his mentors to fight. It was this sense of betrayal that eventually drove him out of the conservative movement and into the arms of the liberal Left.

Soon after his defection, Lind made it public with an article entitled "How Intellectual Conservatism Died," in which he attributed the alleged death of the movement to the post-cold-war shift of its attentions from foreign affairs to social and cultural issues. This piece went nowhere, partly because it was so clearly driven by an offstage animus and partly because of its crassness and intellectual vulgarity. (As an indication of how thoroughly he had signed on with the Left, Lind revived one of its most ignoble traditions in charging that it was out of the lust for foundation gold and political power, and not out of principle or moral concern, that conservative intellectuals had become friendly toward the Christian Right.) But the main reason the article fell flat was that it had the misfortune to appear (in the socialist magazine *Dissent*) just when the movement he was pronouncing moribund had enjoyed a spectacular political vindication in the elections of November 1994.

Curiously, though Lind complained in that piece about the defense of Pat Robertson by a number of conservative intellectuals, he said almost nothing there about anti-Semitism. It was only a little while later, when he repaired the omission in his article about *The New World Order* in the *New York Review*, that he hit pay dirt. With the enthusiastic help of a gaggle of liberal columnists led by Frank Rich, his account of that book was very widely publicized, embarrassing Robertson along with all those in the conservative movement and the Republican party who had failed to dissociate themselves from him, and most particularly the intellectuals at whose feet Lind himself had only yesterday sat. In the process of publicizing his *New York Review* piece, a number of these columnists sweetened Lind's revenge by going back and exhuming his scurrilous *Dissent* article, which they then gleefully used to heap even more obloquy on his former mentors.

PERHAPS because I was never among those mentors, I pretty much escaped being named by Lind and his new political friends. But I will now definitely add myself to their enemies list by saying flat out that in my view Robertson's support for Israel trumps the anti-Semitic pedigree of his ideas about the secret history of the dream of a new world order. In this, *mutatis mutandis*, he resembles Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, who about ten years ago was also accused of anti-Semitism because of some of his ideas about the role of Jews in the past. I for one argued then* that Solzhenitsyn's bitterness over the contribution made by revolutionaries of Jewish origin in bringing Communism to Russia was overridden by his consistently fervent support of Israel at a time when Israel had become *the* touchstone of attitudes toward the Jewish people, and anti-Zionism the main and most relevant form of anti-Semitism. So much was this the case that almost anything Solzhenitsyn might think about the role of Jews in the past became academic by comparison.

Like Solzhenitsyn, Robertson, too, befriended and defended the state of Israel when it was under relentless moral assault everywhere, and not least among liberal Christians, both Protestant and Catholic, who more often than not participated enthusiastically in the orgy of vilification. Hence I would apply much the same reasoning to him as I once did to Solzhenitsyn, even though his ideas about Jewish bankers derive from a lurid paranoid fantasy while Solzhenitsyn's ideas about Jewish revolutionaries are based on an uncomfortable historical reality.

There is even a rabbinic warrant on which, with a bit of pilpulistic stretching, one might analogically draw in Robertson's case. According to the Talmud, a food permitted by the Jewish dietary laws becomes contaminated if a forbidden ingredient gets mixed into it. But under the rabbinic rule of *batel b'shishim*, if the contaminant has slipped in accidentally or unintentionally, and is no more than one-sixtieth of the whole, it is neutralized and the food can be lawfully eaten. There is, of course, no precise standard by which to measure the relative weight of Robertson's actions with respect to Israel today as against some of his words about Jews in the past; and as I have already indicated, the anti-Semitic passages in *The New World Order* are not exactly accidental (though they may in some sense be unintentional). Taking it all for all, however, I would still maintain that the contamination represented by those passages, when set within the context of Robertson's record as a whole, can be considered *batel b'shishim*, and that Robertson can and should be absolved on that basis of the charge of anti-Semitism.

If only the same thing could be said of the other Pat, the secular one, who has now, alas, become rather more prominent on the Right than Robertson himself.

* See "The Terrible Question of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn" (COMMENTARY, February 1985) and "The Solzhenitsyn Question" (Letters from Readers, COMMENTARY, June 1985).

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A Ladies' Room of One's Own

Wendy Shalit

I AM SOMETIMES puzzled by all the talk in universities these days about the "loss of the canon." My own liberal-arts college, at any rate, most certainly has not lost *its*. To be sure, our canon is not comprised of those much-maligned Great Books. Instead there is our required course on "Peoples and Cultures"; there is the astonishing array of sensitivity and "safe sex" sessions which freshmen are forced to attend; and there are the harassment codes to which we must strictly adhere. These immediately introduce us, if not to the best that has been thought and said, then at least to the worst canonical biases of our time.

The prerequisite for appreciating the Old Canon was simply a willingness, in the eloquent formulation of W.E.B. Du Bois, to engage ideas "above the Veil." ("Across the color line I move arm and arm with Balzac. . . . So, wed with Truth, I dwell above the Veil.") The prerequisites for entry into the New Canon are more daunting, involving, among other things, a talent for overlooking contradictions: one must not be racist, sexist, or ethnocentric unless one happens to be black or a woman; one must be positively sympathetic to diversity of gender, race, and sexual orientation but not to diversity of ideas; one must never admit a devotion to truth except to the truth embodied in the harassment code; one must deride the "notion" of historical fact but never question the facts of those who tell their own "survivor stories"; one must cleanse oneself of fidelity to the fixed meaning of texts, except to the texts of the postmodernists. Equipped with such understanding, the would-be adept of the New Canon may dive right in.

But what is left to dive into? If studying the Old Canon required only an ability to transcend the cultural Veil, the parameters of study—man and his nature—were breathtakingly limitless. The opposite is true of the New Canon, where the prerequisites are seemingly limitless while the object of study—oneself, one's own origins—is of a quite narrow scope. If an Old Canon student could echo the Roman playwright Terence, "I am a man: nothing human is alien to me," the student entrapped in the New Canon seems to be forever chanting the dirge, "I am my gender, race, and sexual orientation: *everything* human is alien to me, except for my gender, race, and sexual orientation."

In any case, my chief concern here is simply to take an anecdotal look at the toll exacted by the New Canon, in one area which I find peculiarly emblematic of the whole.

BUT first, an introductory tour. The New Canon makes its presence felt immediately, in freshman orientation. At my college, this mandatory ritual consists of, among other things, a "Feel-What-It-Is-Like-To-Be-Gay" meeting. Our Bisexual, Gay, and Lesbian Union (BGLU) representatives tour the freshman dorms and require *each* student to declare, "Hello, my name is [freshman inserts his/her name here] and I'm gay!"

Next comes National Community Building Workshop (NCBW), a day-long program in which each freshman is required to join a group and compose a list of insults he or she does not want to be called, as in "I'm a woman—don't call me a chick!" or "I'm Hispanic—don't call me a Spic!" At my NCBW I humbly offered "conservative" as my preferred group, and for my insult, "Don't call me a free-market apologist!" There was considerable uncertainty about whether this counted.

One student tried unsuccessfully to pretend he was not in his room when it came time to round us up for NCBW. The rest of us nervously huddled in the hallway while our advisers banged on his door. "We all know you're in there!" Then, at a higher pitch: "You're not going to get out of this! We're just going to *wait* and *wait* until you come out!" When this, too, failed to entice, the tone shifted again: "C'mon, . . . National Community Building is FUN!" You know, that very special kind of fun which requires banging down your door to escort you to it.

Later that week, at a session on "Race, Gender, Identity, and Community," all the students in my freshman class were herded into a darkened auditorium. There we were asked to keep our eyes closed while various slurs were hurled at us from all directions. This marked the conclusion of "diversity sensitivity," and rounded out our freshman orientation.

Having been thus introduced to the New Canon, perhaps I should not have been surprised

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when, this past year, our administration waived the rule against defacing campus property just in time for the Bisexual, Gay, and Lesbian Union to chalk our buildings and sidewalks with obscenities, the better to celebrate National Coming-Out Week. Nor should I have been surprised that in addition to National Coming-Out Week we had Women's Pride Week, and Students of Mixed Heritage Week, and Queer Pride Week, and Bisexual Visibility Week, Latino/Latina Awareness Week, and Eating Disorders Awareness Week. After all, maintaining the proper climate of moral correctness demands constant reinforcement, and if anyone should object, the Dean's Office is ready to respond swiftly with an all-campus mailing. Thus, a memo dated October 14, 1994 warned:

> This week has been National Coming-Out Week, a time marked by events on campus and personal messages in the *Daily Advisor*. In response to one of the messages in the *DA*, a letter that was homophobic and threatening to all homosexuals and bisexuals was submitted to the *DA* for publication. . . . The Dean's Office condemns the letter both for the bigoted attitude it betrays and for the unallowable sense of violence it contains. . . .

Pretty tough. So, should I have been surprised when the administration declined to spring to *my* defense when my door, which sported a poster of the economist George Stigler, was defaced with "F— THE PATRIARCHY!" stickers? Or, when the campus sprouted with posters blaring "I NEVER LIKED THE NAME WENDY ANYWAY: HAPPY WOMEN'S PRIDE WEEK," that it declined to send out an all-campus mailing denouncing conservaphobia? No, I should not. For, as the president of the college clarified the issue for me over coffee: "It is right that you should have to deal with this. You're going to have to face radical feminism after college, too. We can't insulate you, Wendy." This must be why the administration also did not see fit to intervene when the BGLU, expressing "Queer Pride," scrawled graffiti—including "F— MOSES AND HIS HOMOPHOBIC LAWS"—outside the Jewish Religious Center. There is anti-Semitism to face after college, too, so it is better that students not be insulated from it; indeed, why not expose them to as much as possible? Strange, which particular brands of intolerance the New Canon's love of tolerance both fosters and then goes out of its way to protect.

And yet all such episodes, troubling as they may be to the likes of me, may also, curiously, be among the less harmful aspects of the New Canon, and anyway are of the kind that occasionally even provokes nationwide scandal (as in the notorious case of the student charged with racial harassment and threatened with suspension at the University of Pennsylvania for protesting a noisy black sorority party). The more dangerous, I would submit, are those which never attract attention precisely because they do not involve any obvious breach of free speech, or any imposition of some outrageous view. Take, for example, one campus phenomenon which has as yet gone unnoticed, and which involves only the most democratic of procedures: the phenomenon of the coed bathroom.

ON THE surface, the bathroom meeting would seem to be the tamest of all freshman-initiation rites. Unlike "Feel-What-It-Is-Like-To-Be-Gay," the National Community Building Workshop, or Peer Health's "safe-sex" demonstration, no one is forced to join a group, lie about his sexual identity, insult other students, or handle bananas in appalling ways. To the contrary, the bathroom meeting is the very paragon of civility. All the students of a particular floor or "entry" gather together in their common room and discuss whether the bathrooms on each floor should be single-sex or coed; and then everyone votes on the matter. What could be fairer?

But then again, why does the vote always go one way? It happens like this. A girl, usually the one wearing the baseball cap, speaks first. Alluding vaguely to some liberating experience she had while at summer camp, she proudly announces that she has "absolutely no problem" with the prospect of a coed bathroom. Everyone nods in approval, prompting another girl, a bit less tomboyish than the first, to speak next. She, too, declares triumphantly that she has "no problem" with a coed bathroom—it is really "no big deal"—and, she tells us, we can trust her opinion because she has brothers. The incest taboo notwithstanding, this is immediately accepted as conclusive proof that she is "comfortable" with her body.

The chorus is now in full cry, as each young woman tries to outdo the last by advertising how "comfortable" she is with her body, how relaxed, how generally serene. Even the shy girl crouching against the doorway, when her turn comes, will contribute a careless toss of the head and proclaim, if a little unconvincingly, that she has "seen it all." Whatever that might mean in the case of a nervous eighteen-year-old, the implication is quite clear as she expounds, grandly: "*Nothing* fazes me."

The young men are generally silent during this entire ordeal, as if tacitly to acknowledge that women have the most to lose by the coed arrangement and, as such, must decide the matter among themselves. (This pattern exactly comports with Rousseau's prediction in *Emile* that if we should seek to raise our daughters like men, "The men will gladly consent to it! The more women want to resemble them, the less women will govern them, and then men will truly be the masters.") It soon begins to appear as if a vote on the bathroom will not even be necessary, as all seem in accord.

But then one girl objects. She is not so sure, she begins hesitantly, studying the crevices in the wood floor and inwardly reminding herself that this is not a good way to make friends. But the prospect of sharing a bathroom with men she

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hardly knows is enough to make her voice sound fierce. She braces herself for a fight. Yet to her surprise the other girls actually seem, for a moment, to take her part, as the poor benighted miss is surrounded by a pack of worldlings patting her on the back, flattering and reassuring her. "Don't worry, I was just like you once," one of them begins condescendingly, smiling with the smug authority of the victorious. "And then . . . I became COMFORTABLE WITH MY BODY."

And so our last hold-out, mortified, relents, worried less about adjusting to the arrangement itself—she has been guaranteed that, after a few weeks, sharing a bathroom with men will no longer embarrass her—than about overcoming the general perception of her as immature and "uncool." To seal her fate, the resident advisers take this opportunity to announce that if anyone has problems with the coed bathroom, please do come and talk with them—there are any number of good campus counselors at "Psych Services."

I HAPPEN to have been that benighted miss last year, and I would like to think I gave in because I saw the coed bathroom as a very small concession. But try as I might, I never did become enthusiastic about this very small room without a lock, and with only a sink, a toilet, and a shower crowded together. In the beginning, when we planted this lovely garden of togetherness, we all agreed to use a sign to indicate whether a young woman or young man was occupying it. But as classwork began to build up, and we grew increasingly "comfortable" with one another's bodies, it became inevitable that one day I would step out of the shower and . . . mysteriously, the sign had disappeared, and a young gentleman had joined me in our cubicle.

Don't get me wrong. I was quite comfortable with *my* body—had been, all along. It was the intricacies of the opposite sex's body which I wasn't necessarily so eager to study so early in the morning. Not having any privacy was one more thing to worry about when I much preferred to be thinking about, say, American legal philosophy. I tried to negotiate with my resident advisers by requesting that our floor's two bathrooms be assigned, respectively, to a single sex, but I wasn't surprised when they informed me that the decision was irrevocable. We had all voted on it, hadn't we? Fair is fair.

So for the remainder of the year I carried around toothbrush, toothpaste, and washcloth and employed them in the building which houses the college administration and where the bathrooms were still marked, in dear sweet black lettering, with what to me seemed the most reassuring words in the English language: "Women" and "Men." To be sure, I had been instructed in endless classroom sessions that all such words were nothing but social constructs—and yet to those in the administration, evidently, they still meant something, and they did to me as well. For some inexplicable reason, when I walked through the door marked "Women," and looked at my reflection in the mirror, I saw an expression of what could only be called relief. Perhaps it was a secret satisfaction that none of my male professors could enter this place; or perhaps it was only the feeling that I had found, in our quagmire of indeterminacy, at least one thing which could be known. At least I was a woman; at least I knew *that* much.

AND so, when the time came to plan for the next year's housing arrangement, I made sure that I was part of an all-girls suite. That way, I reasoned, our bathroom would be a ladies' room by default.

But things did not turn out to be quite so simple. One day, early in the fall, once again I stepped out of the shower to find a strange man in the bathroom with me—or, rather, the rear of him.

"What are you doing here?"

"Ugh . . . just trying to take a leak. . . ."

"Well, I'm sorry if there's been some misunderstanding," said I, clutching my white towel in what I flattered myself was a most emphatic manner, "but this is *not* a coed bathroom."

For the first time the young man glanced backward to peer at me. He must have been amused at the sight of this small, soaking-wet frame trying to appear intimidating, because he still refused to leave, laughing and protesting weakly instead, "Well . . . there was no sign, ..."

But, see . . . that's what I'm here for," I announced, "*I* am the sign. THIS IS NOT A COED BATHROOM. THIS IS NOT A COED BATHROOM! Do you think you can read the sign now?"

"OK, OK," he mollified, quickly zipping up and scuttling out the door. As he darted down the hall I could hear him muttering, "But you don't have to raise your voice. *Gosh*—she sounds just like my mother. . . ."

Upon reflection I considered that my visitor might have been right, and it would not be a bad idea to put up a sign. I snipped what I thought was an amusing *New Yorker* cartoon of Queen Elizabeth, affixed it to a white sheet of paper, and added a balloon above her head: "This is NOT a Coed Bathroom—Ladies Only, Please. Thank You For Your Cooperation, Gentlemen." Then I returned to my studies, satisfied that the matter was settled.

But the following day my suitemate Karen* knocked on my door and asked me please to come into the common room. There, all four of my suitemates were sitting on the floor wearing very grave expressions. Andrea spoke first. "Wendy, we have been talking and we were thinking, well . . . that sign of yours is really very exclusionary of one gender."

"Exclusionary of one gender?" Was she serious? "Well, yes," I admitted, "but remember, that's kind of the point, isn't it?"

* Names have been changed throughout.

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"But what if I have a guy in my room late at night?" Karen protested. And then Cynthia, unresolved family dramas bubbling to the surface, added, "I'm not going to have someone telling me what to do now that I'm at *college*!"

I drew their attention to the fact there was, after all, a men's suite just one door away, toward which they could certainly direct any male callers. And furthermore, if they required such visceral confirmation of their adult identity, well, practically every dormitory bathroom on campus was coed and they could simply visit one whenever they were experiencing a spasm of insecurity. There were many, many opportunities to be "comfortable" with one's body on campus, but virtually none for modesty or privacy. In a last desperate appeal to their political sympathies, I pointed out that destroying one of the few remaining ladies' rooms would eliminate the range of "bathroom possibilities" available to women, and hence was really not a pro-choice thing to do.

Needless to say, they remained unconvinced. A vote was taken, democratic as ever, and I lost miserably: 4 to 1. Queen Elizabeth came down, and our bathroom conformed to standard.

It was in the wake of my defeat that I began to speculate about the significance of the coed bathroom and its relation to the New Canon. But first I had to collect more data. One mustn't simply extrapolate from one's own experience about such things.

I heard from a girl on my floor that her sociology class was studying gender roles in freshman entryways—for *this* her parents were paying $25,000 a year?—so I asked her for the names of some of her classmates. Eventually I spoke with a number of these students, and one was kind enough to share her final paper with me.

Erika had surveyed accounts of the coed-bathroom "experience" from many freshman entries. Mind you, I was not particularly sympathetic to her conclusions: Erika celebrated the coed bathroom as a way of "loosening the division between the sexes" and counteracting those "undertones of sexism left over from the Victorian era which imply that the woman simply is not supposed to think or feel . . . the inherent belief of male dominance that prevents the woman from feeling fully comfortable." For my part, I was far from convinced that the threat to female "comfort" in the 90's was coming from the Victorian direction. Still, the stories Erika uncovered during her interviews were very revealing.

For it seems that the world of the coed bathroom, and for that matter of the coed dorm, was not all sweetness and light. Erika reports of one freshman entry:

> One evening a couple women [*sic*] were singing loudly in the bathroom, at about one in the morning. Several men from downstairs wanted to sleep and asked them to "shut up." The two sang for a couple more [*sic*] minutes and then stopped. One woman went in the shower; the other was in the bathroom dressed. In came the guys with a bucket of water and they dumped it on the clothed woman and went back downstairs. They came up again shortly thereafter and dumped another bucket of water on the girl who had just gotten out of the shower and had only a towel on.

As Erika sadly concludes: "This incident divided the men and women of the entry, just as their Junior Adviser had made the division between women and men when it came to streaking."

Streaking? Yes. But not to worry—this particular practice is not yet mandatory, only a tactic resorted to by a select few who mean to overcome any lurking sexual "hang-ups" that might have miraculously survived the coed bathroom. Erika explains:

> In one anecdote submitted by a male, he tells a story of going absolutely nude through his dorm. Accompanied by another man, who totally agreed, he justifies his reasons for exposing himself to both men and women without any qualms: "Now let me try to tell you why I do things like this. First and foremost, this is not sexual for me at all. . . . I just feel totally free in the nude. It is the greatest thing in the world. . . . Being nude totally rules. The sense of freedom and liberation is incredible. . . . I feel that nudity also makes us closer than we already are as an entry. I mean, totally nude, there is really absolutely nothing to hide behind. It would also help to increase self-confidence, poise, and self-esteem."

Nor, to be fair, is it just the men who seek self-esteem through nakedness, though women do seem to require a much more elaborate rationale before taking it all off. Arriving at what had been obscurely advertised as "A Performance Piece on Women and the Bible, by Shoshana Friedberg," I was amazed to find the theater absolutely *packed*—and mostly, I noted, by men. I soon learned why. The program read, "Shoshana will explore differences between text and stage." As soon as the piece began, she proceeded to peel off all her outer clothing, and then all her undergarments. Next, with a flourish, she poured some sticky reddish substance from a bottle, applied it liberally over her breasts and thighs, and lay down on the stage, moaning and groaning about the exclusion of women from history. This went on for a half-hour. Her cries of "Oh! The pain of childbirth!" and "Oh! The rape of Tamar!" were interrupted only once, when she abruptly rose and threw herself against each of the four corners of the stage. Then she resumed her moaning and writhing, this time with a red apple stuck in her mouth.

The audience must have managed to get the gist of Shoshana's performance, for it was effusive in its applause. When she reappeared, all flushed and tumbled, she agreed to take questions. One male student, garbed in dramatic

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kente cloth, gushed, "Did you feel free? I thought you looked *very free.*" Shoshana indicated that yes, actually, she had felt very free. Another groupie breathlessly approached the stage. "Can I just tell you how brave you are?" she wondered aloud. Shoshana having nodded her permission, the girl continued: "You are soooo brave! *So brave!*"

Now, since Shoshana was one of the activists who, during Women's Pride Week, had drawn our attention to the perils of sexual harassment and the "objectification" of women, what *I* was dying to know, and asked, was this: when naked, did she worry that the men in the audience might "objectify" her? Absolutely, Shoshana replied, with no trace of irony; but then she was "always concerned about the possibility of being objectified by the male gaze." I pressed further: "Do you find this objectification is more a problem for you when naked than when not?" At this, Shoshana grew a bit uncomfortable. "Well . . . I guess so," was her response. But, she added defiantly, the lesson to be learned from this was not that one "shouldn't go around naked, necessarily, because those attitudes [against nakedness] were products of prudishness and sexual repression, anyway." This was something she learned, she explained helpfully, in a religion class entitled "Eve and the Snake."

So much, then, for my research, which only tended to reconfirm that the ability to overlook contradictions may be the central requirement for entry into the New Canon. In the world of the coed bathroom, young women are "free" to perform strip-teases and parade about in wet towels, secure in the knowledge that their college administration will come down like a hammer on any young man found guilty of "objectifying" them with the "male gaze." In the world of the coed bathroom, everything is sexual, but nothing is sexual, and woe to him or her who suggests otherwise; in the immortal words of Erika's informant, "being nude totally rules."

But the point I want to make by retelling these anecdotes is that the permanent advent of coed bathrooms on campus is not just another sign of the erosion of the mystique between men and women. It is that, of course. But it is also an allegory of the present intellectual atmosphere in our universities, where everything is relative, nothing is "essentially" different from anything else, there are no fixed meanings—and in the name of this very open-mindedness students are daily invited to accommodate the most monstrous propositions, philosophical no less than sexual.

Hence my final example. For all sorts of obvious reasons, the Holocaust is a subject that comes up with fair frequency on my campus, where it has become, alas, a touchstone of that weird mix of relativism and political correctness which is the New Canon's special contribution to the vulgarization of our intellectual life. Thus, in a discussion of winter-study projects this year, I heard one student proffer: "Mine's on the Holocaust, and actually . . . I'm not too happy with it."

"Oh, why not?" I inquired, not without dread.

"Well, the person who's leading the seminar, apparently, her parents or something died at Auchwitz, so she's kind of biased."

"*Biased?* Biased as opposed to which 'perspective,' the Nazi perspective?"

"No, no, that's not what I mean at all. You're twisting things. It's just all so black and white for her, . . . you know."

"No, I'm afraid I don't—please tell me."

"Well, it's all Hitler, Hitler, Hitler with her . . . just Hitler, Hitler, and that's the end of it. She's not very open-minded."

"And to you, it's not Hitler, it's . . .?"

"It's really more structural, it's the whole militaristic *system*, people following orders, that's the sort of thing that's to blame—you have to understand the German militaristic mentality. Authority and domination."

But there is worse. I actually used to hear quite often over dinner, or in philosophy class, that the Holocaust did not "occur"—rather, it "has purchase, compared with the currency derived from other events." One student even explained in my presence that since he was not alive during World War II, he "couldn't really say that the Holocaust *happened*," but since most people "seem to agree about it," he would more properly coin it "a perfectly reasonable conceptual hallucination."

So troubled was I by the frequency of such conversations that I decided to recount a few of them to my philosophy professor. Generally a mild-mannered man, he seemed to gather how upset I was, and sincerely tried to offer what comfort he could: "Don't worry, these students—when they get out of college, they won't be like this. You know what I mean? They'll get over talking like that, in the real world. Trust me."

His response, I discovered, was typical of professors—a variant of, "Pretty soon they'll all be in law school, anyway." And at least it had the virtue of acknowledging that there *was* a world that differed, miraculously, from this one—unlike the dismal prospect of sameness that had been held out to me by our college president. But though he spoke with genuine concern, my professor ended up worrying me even more. For if the late Allan Bloom once feared that our universities were failing to provide a sufficient counterweight to the leveling impulses of democracy, now the question is whether democracy (a/k/a the "real world") can prove a sufficient corrective to the corrupt moral and intellectual habits incubated, as a matter of conscious policy, by the university.

The New Canon, in short, has made a dwelling place for the worst tendencies of mind, and called it home. To me—and, I wonder, to how many silent others?—it has come to resemble nothing so much as that little cloacal room with a sink, a toilet, a shower, and no sign on the door, none whatsoever.

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Where Is the Peace Process Going?

Dore Gold

STILL another moment of transition is occurring in Israel as the government of Yitzhak Rabin moves toward implementing the next phase of the agreement it struck in September 1993 with the PLO in Oslo. As at earlier stages, the arrival of this moment has been beset by delays—for reasons that are not far to seek. Although incidents of Arab terror abated sharply in the months just prior to the deadline for this further extension of Palestinian self-rule, the previous year had been marked by a tremendous increase in anti-Israel violence, and within Israel itself the feeling had become widespread that the entire Oslo "process" had failed—indeed, had perhaps been misconceived from the outset.

That judgment was not limited to Rabin's parliamentary opposition and its supporters in the electorate. The Israeli military, normally extremely reticent about political matters, was quite blunt about the unfolding implementation of the Oslo accords in Gaza and Jericho. Thus, on May 3 of this year, Amnon Shahak, chief of staff of the Israel Defense Force (IDF), told the newspaper *Yediot Ahronot*: "The security situation in Gaza is far from being something to which one can give a passing grade." Shaul Mofaz, who as head of the IDF's southern command has operational responsibility for the Gaza area, told the same newspaper two weeks earlier that Arafat "has not met the conditions of the agreement he signed." In Mofaz's words, "Arafat . . . has failed, failed, failed."

The Israeli man in the street was no less outspoken. If ordinary Israelis had one main priority which they hoped their government would address in any peace settlement, it was personal security; in 1992, the Likud government of Yitzhak Shamir had fallen from power after a spate of knifing incidents that sapped public confidence. But whereas, during the worst years of the *intifada*, Israeli fatalities in terrorist incidents had ranged from 14 to 40 annually, in the past year Israeli fatalities shot up to over 80. Moreover, the sporadic knifings of the pre-1992 period were now replaced with a far more lethal form of terrorism: bus bombings. And these attacks were directed for the most part not at Israeli settlements in the administered territories but at the populace in the heart of pre-1967 Israel. (Some of the more spectacular terrorist incidents, like the kidnapping and murder of Nahshon Waxman, were in fact the work of Palestinians released from Israeli prisons after Oslo.) As two leading Israeli journalists concluded in mid-May: "From the start, Rabin marketed the Oslo agreement as an answer to a security problem. In this sense, the agreement has been revealed to be until today a failure."

IF SUCH sentiments are justified, it bodes ill for the next stage of the Oslo agreement, no matter how warily Israel enters into it and despite temporary respites from terrorism. Are they justified?

To answer that question properly, one has to go back to the beginning of the process by which Israel got itself entangled in its almost-two-year-old agreements with the PLO. Until now this has not been easy to do, for the literature on the genesis of the process is, surprisingly, rather scant. Each of the other major turning points in the country's recent history—the Camp David accords, the Lebanon war, the *intifada*—quickly generated a half-dozen or more books analyzing the political forces involved and the implications of the events in question. By contrast, the Declaration of Principles (DOP) between Israel and the PLO, probably the most important diplomatic agreement negotiated in Israel's short history, and a story that begs for interpretation and insight, went relatively untreated except for a few memoirs by those involved.

Now, however, David Makovsky, the diplomatic correspondent of the *Jerusalem Post*, has come the closest to doing for Oslo what Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein did in the United States for Watergate. Unlike the mass-market books that come out of the Washington press corps, though, *Making Peace With the PLO** is a work of scholarship. Makovsky is especially careful not to allow himself to get drawn into the pre-Oslo debate within Israel over whether peace with the Palestinians was possible, and he is equally careful to avoid the even more polarized debate that has

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taken place in Oslo's aftermath. He does not try to judge the Israeli government's decision-making process, only to understand and explain it.

Nevertheless, and despite its restraint, *Making Peace With the PLO* is fascinating to read, and it offers a vital resource to anyone wishing to reach his own conclusions about what exactly happened back in September 1993, and what it means.

The outline of the story Makovsky tells is well-enough known, of course. A secret dialogue takes place in early 1993 between two obscure Israeli academics and the PLO in Oslo, Norway. The academics are connected with Israel's Deputy Foreign Minister, Yossi Beilin, a man whom Prime Minister Rabin had dismissed years earlier on Israeli television as the "poodle" of his arch-rival, Shimon Peres. Now, with Peres serving, ironically enough, as Rabin's Foreign Minister, the dialogue evolves into a full-blown negotiation that, with Rabin's apparent blessing and support, circumvents the official peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians going on simultaneously in Washington. With astonishing rapidity an agreement is concluded by mid-summer, and the DOP is rushed to Washington for signing. The full prestige of the Clinton presidency is mobilized to back the accord, culminating in the Rabin-Arafat handshake on the White House lawn.

Those are the bare bones; *Making Peace With the PLO* does much to flesh them out.

One thing that emerges with particular clarity from Makovsky's account is that the initial contacts between Israel and the PLO were put, fatefully, into the hands of people with a far greater interest in economics than in security, and with no experience or training as negotiators. That was certainly the case with the two academics, Yair Hirschfeld of Haifa University and Ron Pundik of the Hebrew University, who pioneered the Oslo channel. In a clear reflection of their interests and biases, the text of the DOP was full of references to economic-cooperation projects and joint-business ventures. And the Norwegian sponsors of the contacts were equally prone, as Makovsky notes, to invoke "the experience of the European Community in transforming political relations by institutionalizing shared economic endeavor."

Yet, on the assumption that the Rabin government was irretrievably bent on opening a channel to the PLO, there were other possible routes to go. Shlomo Gazit, the former chief of military intelligence who had been IDF coordinator for the territories back in 1967, had PLO contacts, as did Labor MK Ephraim Sneh, who once headed the civil administration in Judea and Samaria. Either of these men would have brought to the discussions more military experience than what was on offer from Hirschfeld and Pundik. Or Rabin could have picked a loyal political appointee with a background in security and sent him to Norway along with the two academics.

As things stood, however, every major Israeli security organization—the Mossad, the General Security Services, Israeli military intelligence, as well as the IDF—was cut out of the loop; as Makovsky stresses, Oslo lay exclusively in the hands of the two academics from January until mid-May. On May 21, a week after Rabin had given his consent to the proceedings, the first Israeli official, Uri Savir, director general of the Foreign Ministry, joined the talks; yet Savir, although he could make a political assessment for his boss, Shimon Peres, had not participated in previous Arab-Israeli negotiations. Only on June 11 were the talks further strengthened on the Israeli side by the inclusion of Joel Singer, who had served in the advocate-general's office of the IDF and had provided staff work for military talks with Egypt in the late 1970's. But this left very little time for official input; the DOP was completed and initialed by both parties in Oslo on August 20.

In other words, the truly serious phase of Oslo was not more than six weeks in duration. In an interview with Makovsky, Joel Singer (who is now the legal adviser to the Foreign Ministry) conceded that what had gone before had made his job that much more difficult: "If someone who is not a doctor is performing an appendectomy and in the middle of the operation he turns it over to you, you cannot just start from scratch."

But the real problem with the two academics was not their lack of negotiating skills; after all, as Makovsky observes, they had "received only minimal instructions from Beilin" and certainly had not been given any mandate to reach an agreement. Their chief role, at least at first, was to test the PLO's seriousness and to ascertain its true position. But *just here* lay the weakness of the whole enterprise. Makovsky writes:

> Rabin was highly dependent for information regarding the Oslo negotiations upon the two men who were most intimately involved in the evolution of the Oslo process and therefore had the greatest stake in its success: Peres and Beilin.

And Peres and Beilin were dependent, in turn, on the two academics. All four of Rabin's "evaluators," in other words, were true believers in both the possibility and the desirability of a "dialogue" with the PLO. For any one of them to have concluded, after initial discussion, that the contact with Arafat should be discontinued would have meant burying one of the central items of faith on the Israeli Left. In other words, Rabin, to say the least, did not have the benefit of impartial advisers.

WHAT might such advisers have told him? One of the underlying assumptions of Oslo was that the PLO would have both the will and the capacity to fight the extremists in Hamas and Islamic Jihad, and hence pro-

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tect Israel from terror. Makovsky quotes Joel Singer: "They [the PLO] kept saying all the time that Arafat could and would stop terrorism . . . , that Arafat would make the difference." After Oslo was signed, Rabin assured the Israeli public that the PLO would know how to take care of the fundamentalists, and, as he put it in his famously blunt manner, Arafat would not be hampered by the Israeli human-rights lobby and the Supreme Court. Yet independent analysis might have warned Rabin that this would not be the case. As Makovsky writes in one of his strongest judgments concerning the first months of the agreement's implementation, "This appears to be one of the big miscalculations of Oslo."

It is easy to reconstruct how the miscalculation transpired. Across the Middle East, from Algeria to Egypt, Arab nationalist regimes were facing a militant Islamic challenge. Most had not hesitated to unleash the full fire-power of their internal-security forces against armed fundamentalist factions. In the 1980's, moreover, Israel itself had created a South Lebanese Army to fight Hezbollah. Why could not something like this be recreated in the Gaza Strip, and later extended to the West Bank? Since the DOP was to be implemented in stages, Arafat would have built-in incentives for cooperating with Israel against Hamas—good behavior would mean getting the next chunk of territory under his control that much sooner.

But things did not work out as the architects of Oslo expected. Elsewhere in the Arab world, extreme Islamist forces had been challenging political establishments in place since the 1950's. Arafat, by contrast, was only getting started, and was immeasurably weaker than any Arab head of state.

Nor, more significantly, was Arafat's own calculus what the Rabin government imagined it would be. After the signing of the DOP, terrorist attacks were regularly followed by a summit meetings at which Rabin would grimace, invoke the displeasure of Washington, and demand better performance by the Palestinian police. For Arafat, though, as unpleasant as these meetings could be, they were clearly preferable to the full-scale Palestinian civil war that a crackdown on the fundamentalists might have sparked.

Nor was even that all. It soon became evident that Rabin did not possess any real power of sanction against Arafat. To suspend the agreement itself—that is, to admit to failure—would be to incur an enormous political price at home which Rabin was clearly not prepared to pay. And even if the agreement *were* suspended, Arafat would not have lost much; the DOP, which he had negotiated in weakness, had gotten him Gaza and Jericho, and if the negotiations over the rest of the interim-status arrangements should be canceled, the possibility still lay open for jumping directly to final-status talks.

That, at least, is how things unfolded. What Makovsky's description makes clear is that any number of people might have told Rabin there was a good chance they would unfold in just that way.

OTHER eventualities might have been anticipated as well. Makovsky does not get heavily involved in the economic assumptions behind Oslo—the area where the experts were supposed to enjoy a professional advantage—yet here, too, grave errors were made.

In particular, there was an expectation of a major cash windfall: international aid would rain on the occupied territories, and a new Singapore would rise from the sands of the Gaza Strip. As noted above, this scenario had political implications: with Gaza industrialized, thousands of new jobs created, and the standard of living on the rise, fewer young people would be attracted to the ranks of Hamas and Islamic Jihad. Or so at least the logic ran. Economic growth was seen as a good in itself, and also as a precursor of political and military security.

In reality, during the first six months of the Palestinian administration the standard of living in the Gaza Strip did not rise—it fell by some 25 percent. Continued terrorist action forced Rabin to close off Israel repeatedly to Palestinian workers, and within Gaza itself nowhere near enough new jobs were created. Although some recent local investment by the upper strata of Gazan society has generated more construction activity, it has been of insufficient scale to affect any large number of Gazan refugees. In the end, terror and security considerations have dictated economic conditions, not the reverse.

FINALLY, Oslo would prove from the very beginning to have highly deleterious effects on the status of Jerusalem.

Ever since 1967, Israeli governments had been prepared to discuss the rights of various religions to the holy places of Jerusalem. But no Israeli government prior to that of Yitzhak Rabin ever expressed an explicit and unqualified readiness to put Jerusalem itself on the table. This is what the DOP did in making the city a subject for negotiations with the opening of final-status talks scheduled (according to the original timetable) for May 1996.

Rabin's defenders might say there was a precedent for this: Yitzhak Shamir had gone to the Madrid Peace Conference in 1991 with the understanding that all sides could bring any subject at all to the table. But however reckless this might have seemed at the time, Shamir had no intention of giving up control of the negotiating agenda, which in diplomacy is the first line of defense in protecting assets a nation does not want to concede. It was this outer line that fell at Oslo. Whether the Israelis realized it or not, the Palestinians certainly did, and celebrated the fact.

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In the words of PLO negotiator Nabil Shaath:

> [T]he Israelis up to this agreement never accepted that the final status of Jerusalem be on the agenda of the permanent status negotiations. . . . This [the DOP] calls into question the legality and finality of their annexation.

Faisal al-Husseini was even more explicit:

> In the Oslo accords it was established that the status of Jerusalem is open to negotiations on the final arrangement, and the moment that you say yes to negotiations, you are ready for a compromise.

Of course, no more than Yitzhak Shamir did Yitzhak Rabin have any intention of giving up an inch of Jerusalem to the PLO. To the contrary, he looked to the DOP as an instrument that would help protect Israel's position in the city—specifically, by allowing Jericho to evolve into an alternative administrative center for the Palestinians. But the PLO quickly installed two ministers of the Palestinian Authority (PA) inside Jerusalem itself. One of them, Faisal al-Husseini, now minister without portfolio, converted his family's property, known as Orient House, from an Arab-studies society to an administrative center at which major foreign dignitaries were received. The PA also opened at least five other institutions in Jerusalem. The PA's security chief in Jericho, Jabril Rajoub, regularly sent his men into East Jerusalem to seize Palestinians and bring them to his headquarters for interrogation; by the end of June 1994, as Rabin himself admitted in response to a parliamentary inquiry, some 200 Palestinian security personnel were operating in East Jerusalem. All these acts violated explicit clauses in the Oslo and Gaza-Jericho agreements, but Rabin did not combat them.

To judge by Makovsky's account, Arafat deserves high marks for successfully manipulating the Israeli Prime Minister over the Jerusalem issue. Essentially he pursued a double track, ordering the Palestinian delegation at the official peace talks in Washington to demand that the PLO be given some jurisdiction in Jerusalem already in the interim phase, while instructing his people in Oslo to take a more moderate position and agree to put off discussion of arrangements in the city until the beginning of final-status talks. Faced with a hard line in Washington, and seemingly greater flexibility in Oslo, Rabin gravitated toward the latter.

Arafat's Jerusalem ploy appears to have been behind Rabin's decision in May 1993 to upgrade the Oslo talks to the official governmental level. Indeed, one might say that an Israeli willingness to put Jerusalem on the table and at least theoretically envisage its future division is what finally made Oslo possible—surely not what Rabin had in mind, but just as surely something that cooler heads might have pointed out to him at the time, had they been consulted.

IN LIGHT of what Makovsky tells us, it is hardly any wonder that so many in Israel came to the conclusion by May of this year that Oslo represented a dead end. For the implementation of the DOP manifestly *had* failed to enhance Israeli security; failed to improve Palestinian well-being and hence reduce grievances; and failed to protect Jerusalem from the penetration of the PLO. Nevertheless, despite this general failure, the Rabin government persisted in its course, and made clear its intention of moving forward to the DOP's next stages. Why? The answer comes in several parts.

While the conservative portion of the Israeli political community has all along viewed Oslo as a fundamental if not a catastrophic blunder, some on the Left have stressed that, no matter how flawed it may be at any point in its implementation, it represents the correct strategic path. This has been implicit in Rabin's own rhetoric. After virtually each terrorist attack last year, he voiced his conviction that the only way to solve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was through a "separation" of the two peoples. To that end, Oslo has been the means.

Many Israelis, indeed, Left, Right, and Center alike, are attracted by the notion that the Palestinians can be put behind some enormous fortification near the pre-June 1967 borders—a kind of Great Wall of China on the Green Line. For those on the Left who adhere to this view, the real barrier to success has been not the inability or the refusal of the PLO to adhere to the provisions of the DOP, but rather the existence of Israeli settlements built during the years of Likud rule—settlements which Rabin was, at least at first, reluctant to give up. As Makovsky writes, "In private discussions, Israeli negotiators in Oslo admitted that negotiating a quick divorce would have been their preference, but the refusal of Rabin to dismantle settlements at an early stage stood as an impediment." From this it would seem to follow that the way to deal with Oslo's failures is not to discard the agreement but, on the contrary, to *accelerate* the process of "separation."

In fact, however, all this talk of separation is just another way to avoid confronting Oslo's central problem. Separation is based on the principle that good fences make good neighbors. But Israel's history—indeed, the history of every nation in the world—shows that what is true is precisely the reverse: good neighbors make good fences. Where, as with Jordan, Israel enjoys such relatively good neighbors, fences supply security. Where it has bad neighbors, as in Lebanon, fences are wholly inadequate, and successive Israeli governments have had to introduce "security zones" to protect the country's border.

The architects of Oslo thought they could simply ignore the fact that every single one of the cruxes of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict—Jerusalem, borders, the fate of Palestinian refugees—

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remained unresolved. Instead, they proceeded to treat Arafat as though he were already the head of a neighboring state with which Israel happened to have a few, wholly containable, differences. As a thought experiment, this may have had something to recommend it; in reality, it foundered drastically on its own radically mistaken premise.

WHERE, then, is the peace process going? Few would advocate that a future Israeli government should return to the Gaza Strip. But the current focus is on the West Bank, which, unlike Gaza, is right next to Israel's major population centers, as well as to 80 percent of the country's industrial capacity; whatever happens there bears on Israel's security, and indeed on its day-to-day existence, in the most direct way imaginable, and the perils are obviously enormous.

For one thing, as Yaakov Amidror, head of analysis for military intelligence, has acutely pointed out, the withdrawal of the IDF from West Bank cities, called for in the next phase of the agreement, may well *reduce* the PA's incentive to quell anti-Israel violence; terrorist organizations will no longer have to worry about local countermeasures by the Israeli military. But that is by no means all.

When the DOP was reached, it appeared that Israel had definitively abandoned its historic (under-the-table) alliance with Jordan, and from now on would give pride of place to its new relationship with the PLO. King Hussein himself stepped in to correct this distortion by completing his own agreement with Israel during 1994. Now, however, Israel appears about to place in power in the West Bank a political movement—the PLO—openly hostile to the Hashemite throne in Amman, thereby undermining both Israel's own interest and that of the United States in maintaining a moderate buffer state between the radicalism of the Fertile Crescent and Saudi Arabia's northwestern frontier.

One might have imagined an alternative course of action, and correspondingly different outcomes. Even today, when it is very difficult to envision a full-scale Jordanian role in the West Bank, one can still speculate whether many West Bank Palestinians might not prefer a tie with a strong, stable Jordan to one with Arafat's weak and chaotic Gaza. They might, indeed, have preferred such an arrangement even before the DOP, though it would have been impossible for them to say so. In light of what has occurred since Oslo, and what unfortunately appears likely to unfold in the next stage of implementation, is it inconceivable that West Bank Palestinians might yet begin to see their self-interest in more pragmatic and less ideologically charged terms?

For that to happen, however, and for all the interested parties in the region to be in a position to seek better alternatives than today's, the DOP would have to be permitted to lapse. But the chances of *that* happening, so long as the architects of Oslo are directing Israel's peace policy, remain slim indeed.

In the short run, therefore, one must look to other avenues. One thing that would have at least a somewhat salutary effect on the flawed Oslo agreements is a reordering of their priorities, giving primacy to the security needs of Israel in the next, crucial phase of implementation. Here, as David Makovsky's doleful chronicle reminds us, lies the heart of the Oslo "miscalculation." But it very much remains to be seen whether such a reordering will be put into place in the months ahead.

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The Third Mrs. Kessler
A Story

Joseph Epstein

Her eyes—leaning closer to the magnifying mirror, Elaine could read the future in her eyes. Not so long ago one of her best features, they now seemed less brown, less deep, less alive with the hope and promise they once held. Despite ministrations with moisturizers and creams, the skin at the corners had begun to show crinkles. Her once lush lashes seemed thinner, even slightly scraggly, and needed lots of help. Pouches had not yet formed—be patient, she told herself, these, too, will arrive soon enough. The rims tended to redden, especially at night, a condition worsened by many years of wearing contact lenses. She had finally given up the lenses, to which she never quite adjusted, four years ago, just after the divorce from Jacob.

Had she been more beautiful as Mrs. Jacob Kessler, the third wife of the famous pianist, than as Elaine Goldman Kessler, the forty-four-year-old divorced mother of an eight-year-old son, or did she imagine it? Certainly, the world had been much more impressed with her as Mrs. Jacob Kessler. Hotel managers, *maîtres d'*, store clerks knocked themselves out to arrange the best tables, the most capacious suites, the quietest and most comfortable surroundings. Limousines awaited her exit from grand hotels; first-class was the only air travel she knew. Except for the month they spent every summer at Jacob's place in Maine, near Castine, the details of cooking, cleaning, and other domestic chores were assumed to be beneath her notice—these days, working at a full-time job, she sometimes seemed to have time for little else—and even at Castine they had a cook four nights a week. The better part of her ten years as Mrs. Jacob Kessler had been quite magical—the most interesting part of her life, Elaine thought.

She had known about Jacob, of course, even owned some of his recordings, but had not met him until the first night she heard him play in concert. It was in Chicago, at Ravinia, in July, not under the pavilion but in the snug Murray Theater she so much preferred. She had been invited to meet him at a party after the concert at the Wasserburgs. Leonard Wasserburg was a former patient of Elaine's father, a very rich man and a major benefactor of the Ravinia festival. She wasn't at all sure she cared to go, but that night Jacob played the Schubert Impromptus, Mozart's Piano Sonata No. 25 in F, and the Beethoven *Pathétique*, whose second movement, the adagio, she particularly loved.

Elaine's seat was only five rows from the stage of the small theater. She noted Jacob's face, with its flared nostrils, fleshy ears, thick eyebrows, longish hair beginning to go silver at the temples, dark skin—the overall effect very Jewish yet aristocratic. Jacob Kessler was an aristocrat of art, Elaine formulated it to herself that night, someone who had been permitted knowledge of its inner secrets, one of the elect. For his encore, he played Ravel's *Pavane for a Dead Infanta*. He played it, as he seemed to play everything, without effort, his head and shoulders perfectly still, but with a beautifully controlled passion. She watched the slender strong hands returning to Ravel's plaintive theme and thought, in a flash of pure eroticism, of how they would feel playing over her body.

At the Wasserburgs' house on the lake in Glencoe, amid the Matisse, the Motherwells, the Fairfield Porter, and the large Frankenthaler, he approached her. She was then twenty-nine, he forty-three. She had never married. He was recently divorced from his second wife. He was delighted, he claimed, to learn that she wasn't a musician, hadn't even had any musical training.

"Forgive me," he said, "I took you for a cellist."

"Really? Why?"

"A little psychological vice. My world is almost entirely bounded by music. I assume that anyone I meet at such evenings has musical interests, and I try to guess their instrument."

"But why the cello?"

"Deep strings, capable of passion and also darkness; I guess I saw such things in you. I think you would be correct to take it as a compliment."

"I will," she said.

"In any case, I'm thrilled to be wrong."

"Why is that?"

"At least now I won't have to *shlep* a cello case on planes and trains."

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Elaine didn't press him further. She had her car with her, the seven-year-old red Toyota her father had bought for her when she graduated from Wellesley, and two hours later he asked if she minded driving him the few miles to his hotel in Lake Forest. At the hotel, he wondered if she could be persuaded to stay for a nightcap. After a drink, he asked her to stay the night. Although it wasn't at all her way, she agreed without hesitation. They made love, *fortissimo* and *pianissimo*, and she fell asleep afterward, in his arms, Ravel's beautiful little pavane echoing in her head.

HER fear that she had been no more than a night's entertainment was put to rest when, two days later, he sent her a first-class plane ticket to Washington, where he was playing the same program at Wolf Trap the following weekend. He called the evening the ticket arrived, and she told him she would be there. In a calm, warmly reassuring voice, he said he was glad.

Elaine stayed in his suite at the Ritz-Carlton, near Dupont Circle. At breakfast Sunday morning in the Jockey Club, John Houseman came up to their table. Jacob had known the actor a long time, and they spoke as intimates.

"I'd like you to meet my fiancée, Elaine Goldman," Jacob said.

"How pleasing!" Houseman replied, not immediately releasing Elaine's hand. "My very best wishes, Miss Goldman."

When he left, Elaine, her fork playing with the strawberries on her plate, her knee touching Jacob's knee, was unable to look up.

"That's a funny way to go about it," she said. "I mean, learning you're engaged through conversation with a third party."

"I'm afraid I was using old John as a conduit, as they say in the CIA. But I really do hope you'll marry me."

"Do you usually move so quickly?"

"In these matters I do. It's only the small things in life—what tie to wear, what to order for dessert—that I agonize over. Important things never seem to detain me for long, or at least they never have."

"I hope you won't mind if I take some time to think all this through."

"Take all the time you need. I know you'll make the correct decision and conclude, as I already have, that we belong together."

Jacob went on to Boston for a performance at Tanglewood, and Elaine returned to Chicago. She had her job at Leo Burnett, the ad agency, where she was a media buyer; her apartment in Sandburg Village, for which her father had given her the downpayment; her friends, most of them by now married and with children and living in Highland Park or Northbrook. But life in Chicago, after a long weekend with Jacob Kessler, suddenly felt very unreal. Or was it the time, the quite magical time, spent with Jacob that seemed unreal?

When she told her father about it—Elaine's mother had died of a stroke two years before—at lunch at the Standard Club, he showed his usual unexcited reaction. Dr. David Goldman, the noted oncologist, senior physician on the staff of Michael Reese Hospital, was a careful man. He was too careful, in fact too subtle, to tell his daughter not to act rashly. He took a different tack, assuming, as he always had with her, that she had her own good judgment and subtlety. Elaine loved her father without complication.

"I know you've taken into consideration that you will be this man's third wife. You must have thought about your prospects of pleasing him when two women before you were unable to."

"I have thought about it, Daddy," she said. "And I'm afraid I don't have a very intelligent reason for thinking that I can do better. I'm not under illusions that I possess some secret charm that'll change his character. What's worse, I'm not sure I want to change it. He's very dashing."

"There are children from the other marriages?"

"Two daughters, ten and eight, both from the first marriage. They live with their mother."

"Does he see much of them?"

"As much as possible, but, you know, he travels a good deal, both here and abroad, concertizing."

"I see," said Dr. Goldman, but, from the way he said it, Elaine was pretty sure that he didn't see, not really.

THE main dining room at the Standard Club was filled with men who reminded her of her father. They were solid, substantial men, earnest, responsible, serious—men with gravity. Elaine always felt she would marry a younger version of such a man herself: a physician, perhaps, like her father, or a lawyer; in any case a professional man with all that "professional" implied in the way of competence, command, control. And security.

Looking around at all these men in their various dark grey and blue suits and subdued neckties, she thought of Jacob's get-up when he left her at the airport in Washington: soft Italian loafers, tan twill trousers, a buttery soft, blue cashmere blazer, a thick red-striped shirt with white collar and white cuffs from Asser & Turnbull—Asshole & Turncoat, he called them, when she asked—and a rich multicolored ascot from Charvet. Imagining him in this room, she had to suppress a smile.

"Well," her father said, "is there any great hurry about all this?"

"I think Jacob would like an answer before too long."

"What is it likely to be?"

"You know, Daddy, being married to a man like

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Jacob provides every opportunity for an interesting life."

"An interesting life?" Her father's quizzical look suggested that the concept was a fresh and quite strange one to him.

"By which I mean," she continued, "living for long stretches in Europe, meeting artists, a life surrounded by music and beauty."

"I can see where it all must seem very seductive," her father said. "But you won't truly be at the center of it, you know. Your claim will always be through your husband's talent."

"Life is very pleasing with this man, Daddy. It's more intense, exciting, richer than it's likely to be with anyone I've ever met or I'm likely to meet."

"What do you know about his family? Are his parents still living?"

"Neither is. He was brought up in Cincinnati. He was a piano prodigy. They weren't wealthy people. His father worked in the wholesale grocery business. Jacob's mother was the key figure in his life."

Elaine didn't stop to tell her father that, from the age of seven until he was seventeen, Jacob had had a patroness. A wealthy German-Jewish woman in Cincinnati, a Mrs. Loretta Binstock, put him on an allowance of $250 a month, to be used for lessons, private tutoring, clothes for recitals, and other expenses. She also paid his way to the Interlochen music camp in the summers. He was, as Jacob told Elaine, something like her house pet, invited to play for her guests, taught table manners, not infrequently humiliated for his youthful *Ostjuden* crudities. "Mrs. Binstock got her full money's worth," was his final word on the subject.

"So, like you, he's an only child?"

"Yes."

"Only children need lots of attention. I don't worry about where he's going to get his. But where will you get yours?"

"In good part from him, I hope. But do you think I need so much?"

"Truth is, you never did. You were always a good girl. Everything I wanted in a daughter."

"That means a lot to me."

"Sweetheart, you know I only wish you well. All I ask is that you retain your good judgment and remain as thoughtful as you've been all your life. What can the father of an intelligent woman hope but that she not make more than the allotted number of mistakes in a lifetime? You have my blessing."

"I knew I would, Daddy. In time I hope to have your complete approval, too. I hope you'll come to see the quality in Jacob that I do. I don't hope, really—I know you will." She covered his hand—his mottled, dry, veiny hand—with her own.

Dr. Goldman met his son-in-law only four times, for he died two years later of a heart attack, three years before the birth of the grandson who was named after him.

ELAINE and Jacob were married, in London, a month after her lunch with her father. They had their honeymoon while Jacob played concerts across Europe. She sold her Chicago apartment with everything in it, and moved into Jacob's large place on West End Avenue in New York. The apartment was dark, stuffed with books and records, and had two grand pianos. Nothing in the life she lived in Chicago had prepared her for life with Jacob.

Elaine soon came to understood that her husband wished to reside on the same august heights as Vladimir Horowitz. He thought of himself as Horowitz's spiritual heir: the pianist as performer, interpreter, creator, quasi-composer. Jacob imagined—he told her as much—that the line from Franz Liszt, to Anton Rubinstein, to Vladimir Horowitz ended with Jacob Kessler. True, a large number of his contemporaries were impressive in their way—Brendel, Ax, Perahia, the younger (though no longer very) Serkin among them. Then there were the lesser figures: Dichter, de Larrocha, Watts, and scores of others whom he need not worry about. But none had emerged as the pianist of the age as, even in semi-retirement, Horowitz indisputably still was.

In the early years of their marriage, Elaine went on tour with Jacob to Brussels, Barcelona, Athens, Jerusalem. His easy cosmopolitanism thrilled her. This boy from Cincinnati, once roughly instructed in table manners by a German Jewess whose husband owned a downtown department store, was now utterly at ease in Paris, Rome, and London.

Wherever Jacob played, adulation followed. Audiences adored him; critics tended to agree. Vast applause, large quantities of lovely wine and excellent food, no money worries whatsoever—it was a fine life. "Ah, Mrs. Kessler," the Vicomtesse de Rothschild told Elaine one evening at a small dinner party, "Your husband is a great artist, among the very greatest, and we are honored to have him here in Paris—and you with him, of course."

Not that life was perpetually so exhilarating. At home, back in New York, there was Jacob's unrelenting schedule of work. He had once told Elaine of a psychologist interested in artistic achievement who estimated that to become an accomplished piano soloist one needed to begin by the age of four and to have practiced 10,000 hours; to begin as late as eight and to have practiced a mere 8,000 hours condemned one to achieving nothing higher than the third rank. He estimated that he must have practiced for something like 12,000 hours. He had begun, under his mother's supervision, at the age of three. At six, he told Elaine, he had heard Franklin D. Roosevelt,

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in a radio address, formally declare war on Japan and Germany and announce that every American must now do his all. After turning off the radio, his mother had placed her hands on his little shoulders, looked him in the eye, and said, "Jacob, you have just heard your President say that everyone must help the war effort. What you must do, my son, is practice the piano more than ever."

Jacob practiced mornings, generally from nine to one. He always went reluctantly into the room he called his studio, dawdling over a third cup of coffee, asking for another piece of toast. He practiced in pajamas and robe. Elaine would listen as she moved around the apartment. Sometimes he would play compositions straight through, sometimes he would play a movement or a passage over and over and over again. On occasion, she would hear him curse himself. "Stupid!" he would yell. "Idiot! Get the damn thing right!" One morning when his fingers lost their memory of the opening movement of the Mendelssohn Sonata in G Major, she smiled as she heard him cry out, "Goddamn Clara Schumann!" At lunch, when she asked, he told her that it was Clara Schumann who had begun the tradition of playing in concert without musical notation, thus forcing all future virtuosi to do likewise. "It damn near drove poor Myra Hess to suicide, you know." Elaine did not, but it didn't seem to matter.

She would sometimes look in on him during these practice sessions. Unlike in performance, during difficult passages he sometimes ground his jaw, waggled his chin, moved his lips. (When asked, he said he was talking to the long-dead composer, checking to see if he got it right.) During more relaxed passages he did a fine thing with his head, holding it high and off to the side. The utter seriousness of it all impressed Elaine immensely. She felt as if she had married a great athlete, but an athlete engaged in the world's most elevated sport. Watching him, she still couldn't quite believe she was married to this man, let alone now pregnant by him.

They never really discussed having a baby. After a few years of being careful, they simply did nothing to prevent it. Elaine's pregnancy wasn't easy. Horrendous morning sickness attacked her well past her first trimester. She did not speak much about her illness to Jacob. He was nearly fifty years old, a man with adolescent daughters living on the West Coast and an important career in constant cultivation at home. Going to Lamaze classes with her was quite out of the question—not even a broachable subject.

How different this pregnancy would have been in Chicago, Elaine thought. There would have been old friends who had gone through it before or were perhaps going through it now with a third or fourth child. There would have been lunches with much talk about baby clothes and plans for fixing up a nursery. There would no doubt have been a baby shower or two. Elaine missed having her mother to help her through this. Jacob was not unsympathetic, but she understood that—how exactly to put it?—his interest was not fully engaged.

With a career of the kind he had chosen, how could it be? In fact, it turned out that Jacob's agent at CAMI had arranged a European tour for him during the time that Elaine was to deliver their child. He asked if she wished to travel with him and have the baby in Oslo or Stockholm or Copenhagen. She thought about it and decided, no, it would be better to stay in New York, where she had confidence in her obstetrician, a burly, jokey man who reminded her of one of her father's friends. Jacob offered to cancel the tour. Elaine said absolutely not, though she would have loved it if he had not merely offered but actually done it. When her son was born, Jacob, in Stockholm, sent two dozen long-stemmed roses and a magnum of champagne to the hospital. Elaine, from her hospital bed, wondered with whom he thought she might drink it. She remembered, too, that he had had an unbreakable concert date in Los Angeles the day of her father's funeral.

Having understood the scope of Jacob's ambition—or at least believing she understood it—Elaine wished she could find a way to help him achieve what he wanted. But she hadn't the foggiest notion how. When she asked, he replied that merely being herself, being there for him, meant a great deal, really it meant everything. After David was born, she was able to persuade him to move from the West Side. She found a much lighter if slightly less roomy place on East 64th, off Park. He agreed to give up his second piano so that a room could be turned into a nursery for their infant son. Elaine handled all the details of the move.

Jacob insisted they hire a nanny. Elaine didn't see the need for it. But he wanted his wife to have the freedom to travel with him when he required her to do so. She wanted to continue breast-feeding, but at the end of three months Jacob asked her to stop; it interfered with their travel plans and cut into their social life. Jacob was attentive to the child, but, after all, he was a man who had been through this not once but twice before with his own daughters. Children and artists did not entirely go smoothly together; in any case, in an artistic household, the needs of the artist, it was understood, came first.

On a day that Jacob was performing, for example, there was his special diet to be seen to: usually yogurt and perhaps a few strips of smoked salmon on very thin, lightly toasted bread. Coming out of his daily practice sessions, he was generally grumpy. Rather than giving him pleasure in

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his craft, practice reminded Jacob of all the things he wished to achieve at the piano but could not—not quite, or at least not quite well enough. He used to joke—it was barely a joke—that he practiced 364 days a year, and on Yom Kippur he read scores under the bed.

It was not until they were married more than five years that Elaine met Jacob's two daughters. Phoebe and Patricia were fifteen and thirteen, and had been brought up in San Diego, where Jacob's first wife lived. He had paid for their schooling and for most of the other expense of raising them. Their mother, who played viola in chamber-music groups on the West Coast, had never remarried. The girls were in New York to visit an aunt. They were tallish and fair, thin and awkward. Patsy, as Jacob called the younger, wore complicated braces on both her upper and lower teeth. Phoebe, who had her father's good looks, also inherited some of her parents' musical ability; she played oboe well enough, apparently, to consider doing so professionally.

Both girls were shy, and neither was able easily to negotiate the menu at the Russian Tea Room, where the head waiter made a great fuss over their father. He ordered blini and caviar for everyone, instructing the girls how to eat it and urging them to get used to the good things in life. Conversation did not flow easily. Elaine, feeling very much the outsider, attempted to question the girls about their schooling, about shopping in New York, and about anything else that came to mind—and not enough did. Their father braved his way through the meal with puns and less than successful jokes. My poor jokey Jakey, Elaine thought, trying so hard to convince them all that they were a normal, happy family. When the lunch was over, Elaine stood near the door of the restaurant as Jacob put the girls in a cab, not hugging but kissing each lightly on both cheeks. Their aunt was taking them to her summer place in New Hampshire and he wouldn't see them again this trip.

After this lunch, Elaine often wondered how Jacob could have walked away from these girls, so fragile, so vulnerable, left in the world to grow up alone without a father. Her own father, who had been no less preoccupied than Jacob, working with cancer patients whom in most cases he knew he had no hope of saving, had nonetheless somehow managed to convey to Elaine that she made him proud, that at the end of another difficult day the sight of her refreshed him—that, despite everything else on his mind, life without her would have been less good.

The two men, Jacob and her father, were of different generations. Men of her father's generation divorced only when they were driven to it. Without Jacob's divorces, of course, Elaine would never have come into his life, nor would their beautiful son exist. Still, there were those two girls, with their thin legs, shyness, and braces who were being asked to pay the price for her happiness.

She was happy. She had her son and she had her much admired husband. Mrs. Jacob Kessler was not at all a bad thing to be. On the stage, at his piano, Jacob Kessler had magic in his hands, and so abundant was it that some of this magic seemed almost to have rubbed off on her. The young woman at Vidal Sassoon who gave Elaine her manicures, and whose brother was taking piano lessons in Rego Park, one day asked that she autograph the inside packet of Jacob's most recent CD: "'To Jimmy,' if you don't mind." Embarrassed, Elaine nevertheless signed.

"Ja," a sleepy voice on the other end answered."

"Jacob?" Elaine asked.

"One moment."

"Jacob?"

"Elaine?"

"Who was that who answered the phone?"

"That was the maid, dear, come to turn down the bed. It's nearly midnight in Amsterdam. How are you?"

"I'm fine, Jacob. Everything here's fine. How goes the week?"

"With Yervi all goes smoothly. The Concertgebouw remains a pleasure to work with. How's David?"

"He's fine. I hadn't realized it was so late. You'd think I'd have European times down by now."

"Not to worry, darling. Why don't I call you tomorrow?"

"Yes, do call. I love you."

"I you."

Elaine couldn't get that voice out of her mind. It had spoken only three words—"*Ja*" and "One moment"—yet neither in intonation nor logic did they seem the words of a chambermaid. She played them over and over in her mind. Why did the voice sound so sleepy? Would a maid really say "One moment" and promptly hand the phone to her husband? Would a maid even answer the telephone when a guest was in the room? The more Elaine thought, the more dubious the whole thing became.

She decided not to confront Jacob with her suspicions—more than suspicions. She felt she had arrived at this decision in the name of peacekeeping, in the spirit of forgive and forget. Confronting Jacob would do no good—he would only deny it, he would act hurt—and it might even end their marriage. Disappointed though she was, Elaine was not ready to write *finis* to this union. Besides, there was David to consider. Should she deprive her little boy of his father just because she couldn't bear the thought—the fact—of his unfaithfulness? Of course not.

Elaine also had to recognize the possibility that

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she didn't want the marriage to end for her own sake. Divorce, dress it up any way you like, always meant failure, and she wasn't ready to admit defeat. She wasn't ready to become the third Mrs. Jacob Kessler, a sad sordid statistic. She preferred being the current—make that the final—Mrs. Jacob Kessler. She never mentioned the Amsterdam call to her husband. But a few months later, when Jacob sat down at the piano with their young son to test his pitch, and afterward reported that David had no special gift for music, Elaine, for reasons not altogether clear to her, was secretly pleased.

Her marriage became a lie of convenience; a lie, at any rate, was at the center of it. Other marriages survived with other lies at their centers. Men and women grew disappointed with each other; passion grew stale; small, once mildly irritating habits over the years drove husbands and wives nearly crazy with distaste. Still, all these people stayed with what they had; they played on through. As, Elaine was determined, would she. If her husband felt the need occasionally to sleep with another woman, so long as he did so discreetly, well, let him. Jacob Kessler was not after all an ordinary man; his moods, his needs, his life—all were somehow different.

Elaine, then, was prepared to live with things. A certain forbearance was called for; so were certain actressy qualities. She surprised herself at how many she had. At the breakfast table, at social engagements, even in bed she easily enough pretended that nothing was wrong, nothing had changed. She discovered that she was more than a bit of an artist herself.

The evening Jacob played at the White House Elaine knew she had made the correct decision. It was still a good, an interesting, life. The First Lady, whom she sat next to at the concert, confided that Jacob Kessler was far and away her favorite among the pianists of his generation. She asked Elaine about her own musical background. "Me," Elaine found herself answering, "Oh, I used to play the cello, but no longer."

Subtly, almost imperceptibly, the center of gravity in Elaine's marriage began to shift from her husband to her son. There was, after all, so little that she could do for Jacob and so much for David. She continued to take an interest in Jacob's career, sharing concern about his newest recordings, his concert dates, the scuttlebutt about other pianists—"the competition," as Jacob only half-jokingly called them. But less and less did she travel with her husband, who himself seemed less and less to require her companionship. She assumed that on the road he found ways to look after his own needs, all of them. She didn't like to think about it. In the end, he returned to her and their son, that was the main thing. Things were under control. And so they remained for more than a year.

The morning after the night Jacob learned he had won a Grammy for his six-CD recording of the Beethoven sonatas, which critics were comparing to Schnabel's, a morning on which Jacob planned to celebrate by abstaining from practice and instead taking his son out to the park, began badly. It was nine-thirty. David was off in his room, his Filipino nanny, Mrs. Ramirez, helping him dress.

"Elaine," Jacob began, "I fear I have some dreary news."

"Which is?" she asked, looking up from the paper, a cup of coffee in her hand.

"Our marriage is over."

Her half-full cup slipped from her hand, the coffee sluicing off the table onto the Oriental rug she had picked out with such care. "I'm sorry," she said, "what did you say?"

"Over," Jacob said. "I've committed myself to someone else."

"What about your commitment to me and to your son?"

"There'll be money to take care of you both."

"I don't think money's quite the issue here, Jacob."

"No, the issue is my career, in which, it seems to me, you long ago lost interest."

"That's not true," Elaine said, not very authoritatively.

"I think it is. Besides, you must have known coming into this marriage what the arrangements were."

"I thought I did. Maybe I was mistaken. Repeat them for me, please."

"I'll give you the short form. My career comes first. You had to know that."

"Your sleeping with other women, in Amsterdam and God knows where else, is that also part of the arrangement?"

"An artist has certain needs, whether you want to believe it or not. Whatever is good for his art is good for him. That's just the way it is."

"What about an artist's wife? What about her needs? What about children?"

"As far as I'm concerned the world is organized for the creation of art, and nothing else matters. Not personal relations, not family, nothing. I know this is probably repugnant to you, but it's my view—and I'm stuck with it."

Elaine knew that the next utterance, should she dare make it, would mark the end of her marriage. She couldn't hold it back.

"But you just play the music," she said, hearing her own heart pounding, "you don't compose it. Faustian bargains aren't available to piano players, you idiot."

Jacob didn't answer. He turned away. At just that moment David and Mrs. Ramirez entered the room. David was wearing a sailor suit. Jacob swept the boy, who looked so much like him, into his arms and headed for the door.

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"We'll return in an hour or so," he called, without looking back.

IT TURNED out that the woman for whom Jacob left Elaine and David was Irish, twenty-three, and a flautist with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra. Her name was Meagan O'Donnell. As with Jacob's two earlier wives, Elaine never met her. She would from time to time see pictures of the two of them in the fashion press, at a charity ball or benefit.

Jacob gave her no difficulty about the divorce. She came away with the equity in the apartment and $5,000 a month in combined alimony and child support, as well as an agreement that Jacob would pay the expenses for his son's education. This, added to the money she had inherited from her father, left her free from financial worry. Because of his traveling schedule, Jacob asked for no regular visitation rights and accepted Elaine's assurance that he would be able to see the boy whenever it was convenient for him.

It turned out not to be very convenient, at any rate not very often. After Elaine sold the apartment, she and David moved back to Chicago. They lived on State Parkway, near North Avenue, and David, when five years old, was sent to Francis Parker School. He was a cheerful child. Whenever his father played in Chicago, David and he went off for an afternoon, and the boy returned a bit agitated but nothing worse. The effect on him of growing up without a father seemed to Elaine, in cooler moments, perhaps not so awful as she had expected—at least not yet.

When she first returned to Chicago, she thought she might somehow or other involve herself in the musical life of the city: do volunteer work for the Chicago Symphony or the Lyric Opera, or get herself on the board of Music of the Baroque or one of the other institutions in the city. But thinking further, she decided against it. When David was old enough to go to school full time, she returned to her job at Leo Burnett. She never again went to hear Jacob play.

From time to time she went out with men, most of them in their fifties or early sixties, the majority divorced or widowed. At work and elsewhere she was known as Elaine Goldman Kessler. Once, when a man named Sheldon Hefferman, who owned a number of car washes around the city, took her to dinner and asked her what her former husband did, she replied, "Oh, he was in the music business," and let it go at that. Although she never directly announced it to herself or to anyone else, Elaine sensed that she would probably never remarry. She had had her interesting life—more interesting than most—and now it was over.

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Arguing for Free Trade

Paul Johnson

THERE are two scenarios for world trade in the 21st century, an optimistic and a pessimistic one. The optimistic scenario is the one which, almost unthinkingly, most of us subscribe to.

It goes as follows. World trade will continue to expand, faster or more slowly according to which phase of the cycle we are in. Notwithstanding such diversions as the recent skirmish between the United States and Japan, trade barriers will continue to come down as they have done for the past half-century. The world will move toward a tripartite trading system. The North American Free Trade Area (NAFTA) will eventually expand to take in all of Latin America. The European Union (EU) will embrace all of Eastern Europe, including Russia. The East Asian trading area will be represented by Japan, China, Southeast Asia, and finally India. Then, progressively, these three big trading groups, having largely abolished internal tariffs among themselves, will negotiate external tariff reductions as well, and we will gradually move toward a unified world-trading system some time in the second half of the 21st century.

Surely all sensible people want this to happen, and most people believe it will. But it will not happen if we leave it to fate—for the simple reason that to trade freely is not a natural human propensity. Although international trading has existed on a substantial scale for 7,000 years, free trade, for all practical purposes, is a late-18th-century invention, and one which made progress in the 19th century only because determined men pushed it forward vigorously. In the 21st century we could go horribly awry.

For there is an alternative scenario waiting to happen, and it goes as follows. Early in the 21st century, the federalists in the European Union will get their way, creating a European superstate with a single currency and a single economic policy. Building on the Social Charter, which imposes a large number of expensive obligations on European companies, the EU will set up an internal welfare state, financed not only from the overall federal budget but by more or less compulsory contributions from the private sector. The consequence will be to raise unit costs for EU goods and services to the point where they become uncompetitive in world markets—a process which has, indeed, already begun.

In this scenario, the mercantilists within the EU (again, already quite influential) will take over policy wholly. In a classic mercantilist maneuver, the EU will not only push up its external tariffs but will adopt a system of both open and hidden subsidies for its manufacturers, especially its high-tech exporters. This new anti-free-trade approach will be justified pragmatically, but clever writers will also come forward to argue against free trade on the idealistic grounds that it destroys peasant societies and craft industries, fragile and irreplaceable cultural traditions, and, of course, the environment. Once established and made intellectually and emotionally respectable, the green-tinctured mercantilism of the 21st century will find enthusiastic followers everywhere, who will link arms with domestic-industry lobbies and trade unions to demand protection.

EVEN North America will not be immune, for it should not be forgotten that all three constituents of the new Free Trade Area have protectionist traditions of their own.

The United States, to begin with, is itself a comparatively recent convert to free trade. Ever since, in 1791, Alexander Hamilton's *Report on Manufactures* urged the adoption of systematic protective tariffs to foster native industry—using exactly the same arguments current in Europe today—the U.S. has had an instinctive urge to resort to protective measures, especially in times of trouble. (Until World War II, in fact, it was a high-tariff nation.) To the north, while English-speaking Canadians tend to be free-traders, French-speaking Quebecers are fanatical mercantilists. To the south, many of the same Mexicans who favor free trade in order to get access to U.S. markets would not oppose a high external tariff to keep out cheap Asian exports.

Thus, it is not hard to envision NAFTA reacting to a high European Union external tariff by imposing similar barriers of its own, in effect spelling the end of the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT).

And what about Asia in this scenario? Aside from former Western colonies like Hong Kong, Singapore, and Macao, genuine free-traders are thin on the ground there. Most Japanese, Chinese, and

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Indian intellectuals believe—and so it is taught in their schools and universities—that the West tried to impose free trade on Asia to destroy its native industries. If the "white" EU and NAFTA impose big external tariffs, Asians will be quick to react in hostile fashion, speeding up progress toward a tightly organized trading federation and digging in behind a high barrier of their own.

And so—the pessimistic scenario concludes—the three great trading groups, far from moving closer together to form eventually a single system, will move violently apart, to become, respectively, Fortress Europe, Fortress America, and Fortress Asia. This, indeed, was the vision of George Orwell in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. That book is rightly remembered for its dark forecast of an entirely totalitarian future, which miraculously has not come to pass (in part because Orwell's warnings were heeded). But Orwell also foresaw the dangers of a world divided into three implacably hostile blocs, refusing to trade with one another and habitually at war. This aspect of his prophecy, now forgotten, bears an uncanny resemblance to what lies in store according to the pessimistic scenario of the 21st century.

HIGH external tariffs do not *necessarily* lead to tariff wars; but historical experience shows that they often do. Similarly, tariff wars need not lead to cold wars, let alone to hot wars; but, again, experience shows that they can. Although very few Americans may remember the Smoot-Hawley Tariff of 1930, it was an important event in world history—and it has some claim to be regarded as the most disastrous piece of legislation ever enacted by Congress.

By raising tariffs to combat the growing Depression, Smoot-Hawley left other nations with little choice but to embark on a similar series of beggar-thy-neighbor policies. World trade declined sharply, thus deepening the Depression: even in 1939 it was smaller in value and volume than it had been in 1914. There is no doubt that the dire economic repercussions of these trading wars contributed to the vicious international tension which led directly to World War II. Certainly, without the trade factor it is most improbable that Japan and the U.S. would ever have come to blows.

How to guard against such tariff competition taking place again? One way is to ensure some kind of overlap among the three great trading blocs. Here, my own country has a crucial role to play.

The internal politics of the European Union are little understood in America, and the part Britain takes in them is hardly understood at all. Most Americans harbor a vague desire that European federation succeed, and insofar as Britain resists federation it is seen as a nuisance. President Clinton has more or less registered this view explicitly.

Admittedly, the fact that the British political parties are hardly at one on this issue does not help matters. Yet, however haltingly, Britain *is* waging a fight within the EU, not so much against federalism as against what I have called Fortress Europe. For just as the French invented mercantilism, Britain invented free trade, and these two principles are still at war in the chambers of the EU in Brussels. In brief, Britain wants the EU to be outward-looking with low and falling external tariffs, not inward-looking with high and rising ones.

If, as looks increasingly likely, Britain loses this battle and becomes a tame and dutiful part of Fortress Europe, the pessimistic scenario will become so much the more probable. But there is also the possibility that the EU might divide into two categories: a fast-track group moving swiftly toward the European superstate and a group, including Britain, whose primary interest would be in creating a European free-trade area. If that should happen, the way would be open for Britain, plus other EU members like Portugal and non-EU states like Norway, to seek entry into NAFTA, whose initials would then signify not the North American but the North *Atlantic* Free Trade Area.

I myself see no reason why Britain could not belong to both the EU and such a new NAFTA. Indeed, there would be distinct advantages all around in having a major exporting nation acting as a bridge between the two groups, and thus pointing the way toward the general tariff reductions which might eventually bring about a merger between them. Britain has served as a pilot-nation before in history, promoting the rule of law, parliamentary institutions, the industrial revolution, and of course free trade itself. If it succeeds in the present case, the balance might in the end be tipped away from the pessimistic scenario and toward the optimistic one.

It goes without saying, finally, that Britain can only play this role successfully if it has the cooperation and the active encouragement of the United States. As in every other major area of global politics, the future of world free trade depends in the final analysis on an imponderable: whether and whither America leads.

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Two Cheers for Kurt Masur

Terry Teachout

When the German conductor Kurt Masur was appointed music director of the New York Philharmonic in the fall of 1991, he inherited an orchestra in disarray. Under the baton of his predecessor, Zubin Mehta, the Philharmonic's playing had become slack and undisciplined, and the orchestra had lost its recording contract with CBS. Although such deterioration was nothing new for the Philharmonic—much the same thing had happened after Arturo Toscanini left in 1936 and was replaced by John Barbirolli—Mehta's tenure was regarded by most critics and musicians alike as an all-time low.

The decline of any orchestra is news, but the decline of the New York Philharmonic has wider implications. It may not be the greatest American orchestra—even in the 30's, under Toscanini, it was no better than the Boston Symphony under Serge Koussevitzky or the Philadelphia Orchestra under Leopold Stokowski—but for a long time it has been without question America's flagship ensemble. Its Sunday-afternoon matinees were broadcast nationwide over the CBS radio network well into the 60's; under Leonard Bernstein, its popular recordings and televised "Young People's Concerts" introduced the baby-boom generation to classical music (as well as to Bernstein, the first star conductor of the TV era). And with the opening in 1962 of Lincoln Center, America's first arts complex, the Philharmonic's unofficial status as the country's most important orchestra was, so to speak, cemented. Even now, a quarter-century after Bernstein's retirement, musicians here and abroad still look to the New York Philharmonic for clues to the state of classical music in the United States.

Under Kurt Masur, the Philharmonic emerged from the doldrums of the Mehta era and came back into focus. For the first time in years, well-tuned, well-balanced playing became the rule rather than the exception at Avery Fisher Hall. Listeners responded favorably both to the improved quality of performance and to Masur's taut, no-nonsense interpretations. The Philharmonic even began recording again (albeit on a smaller label, Teldec, which captures it in concert rather than at more expensive studio sessions). It soon became clear that Masur and the orchestra were in for a honeymoon of some duration.

Now, at the end of his third season, Masur seems to be solidly entrenched, but signs of unrest have also surfaced. Complaints are starting to appear in the press to the effect that his programming is pedestrian; though audiences continue to show every outward sign of satisfaction, reviews of the orchestra's recordings for Teldec have been tepid and the recordings themselves are said to be poor sellers; finally, rumors of deteriorating relations between Masur and his players have circulated throughout the New York musical community. So, whether or not the honeymoon is indeed over, this is an opportune moment to take stock of Masur's achievement so far—not only for what it represents in itself, but with a view to its larger significance for American musical life.

Most of the regular conductors of the New York Philharmonic have been international stars: Willem Mengelberg, Toscanini, Bruno Walter, Dimitri Mitropoulos (largely forgotten now, but a celebrity in his day), Bernstein, Pierre Boulez, even Mehta before his failure to maintain standards took its toll on his professional standing. Kurt Masur, by contrast, is what Europeans call a *kapellmeister*: a sober, reliable musician of no particular charisma. His longest professional affiliation before coming to New York was with the Leipzig Gewandhaus, an orchestra regarded by most critics as no more than an excellent provincial ensemble. In the late 80's he was best known in America not for his conducting but for the ambiguous role he played in the East German democratization movement, which nearly led to his becoming president of East Germany in 1989.

That such a man should have been tapped to lead an orchestra known for its virtuosity and temperament came to many people as a surprise. And three years later Masur still remains an odd man out in the ranks of celebrity conductors. Bald, somewhat stocky, unmemorable in appearance or demeanor, he cuts a strangely anonymous figure on the podium. Because his right hand is partially paralyzed, he conducts without a baton, and his beat is large and nervous. Masur rarely indulges in *rubato* or other rhetorical flourishes: he favors brisk tempos and brusque inflections, and his performances, though at times surprisingly high-strung, are usually unaffected to the point of bluntness.

Masur is, in short, a thoroughly modern conductor—post-Herbert von Karajan, one might even say, except that unlike in the case of that legendary conductor of the Berlin Philharmonic, there is no slickness in the forceful sound Masur draws from the New York

Terry Teachout *is associate editor of the* New Dance Review. *His article, "'Harvey Milk,' Etc.," appeared in July.*

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Philharmonic. In the standard 19th-century German repertory—Beethoven, Schubert, Mendelssohn, Brahms, Schumann, Wagner—his uncomplicated style, which is occasionally reminiscent of Toscanini in its forthrightness, yields impressive results. He is also at home in certain kinds of 20th-century music, Shostakovich and Janáček in particular. Like most German conductors, Masur has no understanding of French music, and rarely conducts or records it; similarly, his infrequent ventures into American music are clearly motivated by duty rather than by sympathy.

IN LINE with these qualities, Masur's Philharmonic programs are for the most part predictable. What makes them worth hearing is the extent to which they embody what might be called the banal virtues: correct intonation, intelligent phrasing, a careful avoidance of gratuitous idiosyncrasy. After the meretricious "glamor" of Mehta, such honest music-making is understandably refreshing.

But conducting is not just about the banal virtues. Glamor—sometimes even false glamor—is intrinsic to what conductors do. Every great conductor since Richard Wagner has understood that his job is to communicate musical insight and inspiration, to audiences no less than to orchestras, through the act of self-dramatization. Good taste is not always a virtue on the podium, and vulgarity not always a vice. "The mentality of conductors," the violinist and pedagogue Carl Flesch once said,

> is a dark, abysmal chapter that still awaits a historian. Conducting tends to spoil the character. When all is said and done, it is the only musical activity in which a dash of charlatanism is not only harmless, but positively necessary.

Kurt Masur is a fine musician wholly lacking in such "charlatanism." He has no star quality, no aura. And this inevitably affects the impression he makes in concert. "There should always be a sense of festival about going to the Philharmonic," Leonard Bernstein said in 1958, shortly after becoming the orchestra's first (and, so far, only) American-born music director. Bernstein was talking about his programming, but he also meant that one expects more from a concert than good music played well: one also hopes for a sense of occasion, a feeling of participation in a unique and indelible event.

Kurt Masur's concerts can be exciting, and are always beautifully played. But the festival quality, the sense of occasion, is rarely present.* A Masur program does not often add up to more than the sum of its parts: an overture, a concerto, a symphony, all conducted with energy and high seriousness, all played with skill and commitment. It sounds admirable in the telling—but it is in the long run not enough.

OTHER considerations weigh against Masur as well. Like most American orchestras, the Philharmonic is a market-driven institution that caters consciously to an aging audience of musical conservatives and gives them what they want: 19th-century German music, conducted by a European. In this it does not stand alone. Not one of this country's "Big Five" orchestras (New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Chicago, and Cleveland) has an American-born conductor, and one, the Philadelphia, is currently led by a man, Wolfgang Sawallisch, with a Masur-like pedigree.

But the suitability of this approach to the needs and interests of newer and more adventurous listeners is at present the subject of intense debate within the music business. Orchestras in middle-sized cities are under pressure to increase the popular-music content of their seasons and, more insidiously, to adopt multicultural practices not only in hiring but in programming.

These tendencies have mostly been resisted by the Big Five. That is the *good* side of opting for tradition-minded European music directors over opportunity-driven Americans prepared to whore after crowds regardless of artistic cost, or ideology-driven Americans bent on fitting music to the Procrustean bed of their political beliefs. The "museum function" of great performing-arts institutions is central to their integrity. If we have to choose, better to have a slightly stodgy conductor who sticks to Beethoven and Brahms than a flashy phony with a taste for trendy junk.

But there is another choice. In their day, Stokowski and Koussevitzky believed devoutly in modern music in general and, especially in Koussevitzky's case, American music in particular. ("The next Beethoven," Koussevitzky used to say, "vill from Colorado come!") Both men also used their personal glamor to sell modern music to skeptical audiences, as of course did Leonard Bernstein, Koussevitzky's most famous pupil. Under Bernstein, the Philharmonic programmed, recorded, and broadcast large amounts of accessible modern music, much of it American. Far from antagonizing audiences in the process, Bernstein was their darling; in the course of his twelve years as music director of the New York Philharmonic, he became and remained the most famous classical musician in the world.

That Bernstein's methods are reproducible and not unique to one charismatic individual is evident when one looks at three second-tier American orchestras, all led (or about to be led) by American conductors.

In Seattle, Gerard Schwarz has put an obscure orchestra on the map by specializing in the "great American symphonists" of the 30's and 40's and recording their works for the Delos label. In St. Louis, Leonard Slatkin has spent the last decade turning a provincial orchestra into a virtuoso ensemble at the very top of the second tier; he, too, has consistently programmed American music (as well as recording it for two major labels, BMG

* The same is true of Masur's recordings, which are also, almost without exception, of the standard repertory. Significantly, the only ones to which I have wanted to listen more than once are of non-familiar fare—Shostakovich's Thirteenth Symphony and Kurt Weill's *Seven Deadly Sins*. The Shostakovich was recorded live in January 1993 (Teldec 4509-90848-2). *The Seven Deadly Sins* (coupled with the orchestral suite from Alban Berg's opera *Lulu*) was recorded live in December of the same year (Teldec 4509-95029-2).

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and EMI). Widely touted three years ago as a possible successor to Zubin Mehta, Slatkin has instead become the Philharmonic's most frequent guest conductor, and the only one who regularly performs American music. Finally there is the appointment of Michael Tilson Thomas, a Bernstein protégé, as music director of the San Francisco Symphony. Thomas's inaugural season, which begins in September, will be climaxed next June by a three-week-long festival of American music, and American music also features prominently in the season's regular programming.

In choosing Kurt Masur over Schwarz, Slatkin, or Thomas, the management of the New York Philharmonic made a powerful statement about the orchestra's institutional priorities. Whether or not new listeners will continue to be responsive to these priorities remains to be seen. My own suspicion is that under Masur, the Philharmonic, no matter how well it plays, will increasingly be perceived as irrelevant to the musical interests of these listeners, in New York and elsewhere.*

A FINAL note. In 1940, Virgil Thomson made his debut as music critic of the *New York Herald Tribune* with a slashing review of a concert by John Barbirolli and the New York Philharmonic. Thomson's review ended as follows:

> The concert as a whole, in fact, both as to program and as to playing, was anything but a memorable experience. The music itself was soggy, the playing dull and brutal. As a friend remarked who had never been to one of these concerts before, "I understand now why the Philharmonic is not a part of New York's intellectual life."

Fifty-five years later, a few weeks after the 50th anniversary of V-E Day, Kurt Masur and the Philharmonic gave a free Memorial Day concert at New York's Cathedral of St. John the Divine. The orchestra played Richard Strauss's *Metamorphosen* and the Beethoven "Eroica" Symphony. The concert, unlike Barbirolli's, was decidedly memorable—Masur's "Eroica" was one of the strongest things I have ever heard him do—and the capacity crowd listened with obvious pleasure.

I shared that pleasure. But I was also struck by Masur's choice of music, as revealing as it was obtuse. *Metamorphosen* is a noble lament for the destruction of German culture in World War II, composed at the end of his life by a man whose own relationship to the Nazi regime had been at best equivocal. Putting aside the presumably unintended irony of performing *Metamorphosen* on the 50th anniversary of the death of Hitler, I could not but marvel that it apparently had never occurred to the music director of America's most important orchestra to play an appropriate piece of American music—Copland's Third Symphony, say—on so momentous an occasion. In Leonard Bernstein's day, such a choice would have been taken for granted.

To be sure, the program said much about Kurt Masur's irreproachable musical taste, and how he has breathed new vitality into a once-demoralized ensemble. But it said even more about the extent to which he is out of touch with American culture—and also why, 153 years after the founding of the New York Philharmonic, the symphony orchestra as an institution has only intermittently been a part of America's intellectual life.

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* I recently posted a message on the classical-music bulletin board of the Music/Arts Forum of CompuServe, an on-line service for computer users which receives hundreds of messages each day from music lovers around the world. I invited members to comment on the Philharmonic under Masur; I got two replies.

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Down From Eden

A MOMENT ON THE EARTH: THE COMING AGE OF ENVIRONMENTAL OPTIMISM. By GREGG EASTERBROOK. *Viking. 745 pp. $27.95.*

Reviewed by JEFFREY MARSH

BEGINNING with the publication of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* almost 35 years ago, a parade of books on the environment has marched up and down the best-seller lists, virtually every one arguing that without radical change in the practices and values of Western civilization, humanity will be doomed. A new book, *A Moment on the Earth*, has now joined the procession, but it appears to have done so without a fully validated permit.

Gregg Easterbrook, a contributing editor of both the *Atlantic* and *Newsweek*, is a dogged researcher and independent thinker who writes with unusual verve, conviction, and wit. He is also a self-declared liberal, who affirms that "I long for examples of government action that serve the common good." When it comes to the subject of this book, Easterbrook hails "the extraordinary success of modern environmental protection" as "perhaps the best instance of government-led social progress in our age."

Yet despite his praise for what environmentalism has wrought, *A Moment on the Earth* is, in fact, devastating to the environmentalist cause. The heart of the book is a review of some two-dozen purported and highly-publicized threats to nature from human activity. In each case, Easterbrook finds that activists grossly and often unscrupulously distorted the facts and exaggerated the dangers in their effort to force government action. Along the way, he limns a powerful critique of the anti-rational, misanthropic concepts that lie at the heart of environmentalist thought.

A PARTICULARLY telling sample of what Easterbrook discovered can be found in his treatment of the controversy over acid rain. In the 1970's and 1980's, activists directed much of their energy toward publicizing how power-plant and industrial emissions were bringing about a second "silent spring," poisoning trees and killing lakes on a grand scale. But this new silent spring was never in danger of dawning. Drawing upon the results of a ten-year, $540-million research effort by the National Acid Precipitation Assessment Program, Easterbrook shows that the problem was limited to only a few high-altitude forests and a tiny fraction of lakes, where excess acidity could be inexpensively ameliorated by the simple expedient of pouring in lime.

In the greener-than-thou world of American politics, however, these findings were ignored by politicians on both sides of the congressional aisle. Ultimately, the campaign against acid rain culminated in the passage of draconian air-pollution legislation; the Clean Air Act amendments of 1990, signed into law by a timid President Bush, compelled industry to spend billions of dollars on additional and wholly unnecessary emission controls.

As *A Moment on the Earth* shows, the broader intellectual underpinnings of environmentalism are as shaky as the "science" that produced inflated claims about acid rain. The central tenet of the movement—that the natural world has been steadily deteriorating from the Edenic purity of the preindustrial era—is wholly divorced from observable fact. Nature, writes Easterbrook, is never moving in any one direction but is constantly in a state of flux. Over the eons, massive geological forces have acted and continue to act to transform any particular location on earth from lush tropical forest to frozen glacier, or from ocean bottom to mountain top, while life forms adjust or perish or flee. In comparison to the damage nature itself can do, mankind's power to wreak destruction is paltry and insignificant.

And nature, the great destroyer, also possesses recuperative resources that are consistently underestimated by those who subscribe to the environmentalist creed, a point nicely illustrated by *A Moment on the Earth*'s post-mortem on the *Exxon Valdez* accident. When Exxon's supertanker ran aground in Alaska in 1989, spilling millions of gallons of oil, much wailing was heard over the allegedly permanent damage to the pristine waters of Prince George's Sound. Yet with the passage of only a few years, nature, alone and unassisted, has cleaned up virtually all of the oil, and the photogenic living creatures of the region have returned. Ironically, the recovery proceeded most slowly in those very areas where Exxon, spurred by public outrage, devoted extensive efforts to removing every last trace of oil. The vigorous steam-cleaning utilized in this process destroyed the microbial life that elsewhere enabled nature to heal on its own.

Furthermore, and contrary to what environmentalists fervently preach, industrialization and development are not the prime causes of environmental degradation, but rather the essential prerequisites for eliminating it. Thus, the depredations of the early industrial revolution, as Easterbrook points out, have long since been ameliorated in the advanced Western world by the march of technology and the efficient use of resources that invariably follows in its wake. Today, the world's worst air-pollution problems are certainly not found in the United States (where regulators are busy contemplating ways to reduce, of

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all things, lawnmower fumes) but in the underdeveloped third world, where millions of children die every year from respiratory diseases linked to the ubiquitous use of dung as a cooking fuel, and where all sorts of other all-too-real environmental horrors abound.

The environmental movement, of course, has tended to ignore such real problems, concentrating its fire instead on remote and hypothetical dangers to the earth. As this skewed perspective suggests—and as Easterbrook's book convincingly documents—environmentalism's deepest problem is not intellectual but moral. It has long exhibited a sustained disregard for the needs of living people, and a persistent inclination to devalue the worth of human life. Some environmentalists, in fact, speak openly of humanity as "a cancer on the face of the earth." This sentiment is by no means confined to the movement's extremes—Easterbrook recounts his own experience of being hissed by an audience at the Harvard Divinity School when he asserted that people are more important than animals and plants.

NONETHELESS, and in contradiction to its powerful indictment of the environmentalists, *A Moment on the Earth* concludes on a most peculiar note. According to Easterbrook, the excesses of the movement could easily be remedied. All it need do is adopt a philosophy he calls "ecorcalism," which substitutes logic and the priority of human needs for the emotionalism and one-sidedness he decries. But even as he urges environmentalists to follow the light of reason, Easterbrook soars off on his own high-altitude flights of utopian speculation. Ecorealism, he prophesies, will bring us to a new stage of development which may well entail "the end of predation by animals against animals," "the end of predation against animals by people," "the end of extinctions," "the end of disease," "security against killer rocks" (asteroids), "no more aging," "an end [to] the waste of the Sun's output," and, finally, "an end to oblivion" after death.

A Moment on the Earth has a flaw yet more serious than its occasional departures from *terra firma*. After persuasively demonstrating how environmentalism has both distracted our attention from serious problems and wasted untold resources, Easterbrook, unaccountably, declares that "a few decades hence . . . society will consider every environmental program running now to have been a bargain, and wish more programs had been started sooner." Statements like this make vivid the cost in intellectual honesty exacted by Easterbrook's determination to hold on to his credentials as a liberal.

Still, if one can overlook such lapses, *A Moment on the Earth* provides a most valuable corrective to environmentalist hysteria. Just for that reason, perhaps, one cannot help wishing it were even better than it is.

Our Dialectical Century

THE AGE OF EXTREMES: A HISTORY OF THE WORLD, 1914-1991. By ERIC HOBSBAWM. *Pantheon. 640 pp. $35.00.*

Reviewed by WALTER A. MCDOUGALL

A "*powerful* interpretation, . . . great analytical force," writes Eugene Genovese in a review of this book; "I doubt that we shall get a more penetrating and politically valuable [account]." A "bracing and magisterial work from a rich and acerbic mind," adds Stanley Hoffmann. "It proves the vitality and importance of [Hobsbawm's] approach to history." And Tony Judt: Hobsbawm's "latest book is a challenging, often brilliant, and always cool and intelligent account of the world we have now inherited." Even the *Economist* finds *The Age of Extremes* "a brilliant study," whose method pays "vast dividends" and has "laid down the lines on which the debate [over the meaning of the 20th century] will proceed."

Why have critics, including the distinguished historians quoted above, been so kind? Do they really sympathize with the views of the author, an iconoclastic but nonetheless dreary old British Marxist? Or do they feel an impulse to be gentle with a famous historian who lost so much of himself when the Soviet Union crashed and burned? Ah, the poor academic Marxists and fellow-travelers: they take early retirement now, or skulk to and from their campus digs at odd hours, avoiding your eyes. I have felt sorry for them myself sometimes . . . until I read *The Age of Extremes.*

ONCE upon a time Eric Hobsbawm was a scholarly Ajax, whose cuts and thrusts at shibboleths forced conservatives, liberals, and sometimes even fellow radicals on the defensive. His *Industry and Empire* (1968) was a classroom standard, and his three-volume history of the "long 19th century," broken into Ages of Revolution, Capital, and Empire, bristled with data and *aperçus*. But this swan song of a volume is more useful to pathology than to sociology. Its theories shed more light on the author than they do on his subject, while the facts, about important things, are not so much wrong as absent.

Hobsbawm confesses in the preface that "I have accumulated views and prejudices about [the 20th century] as a contemporary rather than as a scholar," and "avoided working on the era . . . for most of my career." He comes to it, he adds, "without the knowledge of the scholarly literature" and is, in short, "what my ancestors would have called a *kibbitzer*." While admiring his candor, we are left to ask how, then, he can justify this project at all, especially in the light of his immediately subsequent lament on the lack of historical memory among young people today?

Yet even though his account is, by his own admission, ignorant, impressionistic, and prejudiced, Hobsbawm has nevertheless taken it upon himself to "remember," for a woefully ignorant public, the most violent century in history. And he assures us that his purpose is nothing less than "to understand and explain *why* things turned out

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WALTER A. MCDOUGALL, *a professor at the University of Pennsylvania and fellow of the Foreign Policy Research Institute, won the Pulitzer Prize in history in 1986.*

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the way they did, and how they hang together." But, despite this grand ambition, he repeatedly pronounces himself at a loss. That the democracies organized for war better than bureaucratic Germany is, he writes, a "paradox"; the democratization of modern war is "strange"; the dynamism of postwar capitalism "surprises"; and the fact that so little industry moved to the colonial world is "astonishing." At the same time, Hobsbawm is cocksure about far more complicated things, like the nature and triumphs of fascism. The result is a bewildering mass of unproved assertions pronounced, as it were, *ex cathedra* and leaving the impression that their author may not be so far removed after all from the fact-denying deconstructionists he tells us he loathes.

HOBSBAWM begins with the two world wars, which he considers a single conflict spanning 31 years. He disposes of them both in 32 pages, even though they are his prime movers of the century. In the case of World War I, not only are battles and strategy neglected but so are words like liberty and democracy, which do not appear except in the context of disparaging remarks about Woodrow Wilson's peace plans and the perverse need for democratic governments to whip up their people with propaganda. Instead, Hobsbawm focuses on the question of why the war of 1914 became an unstoppable bloodbath, "a war which could only be totally won or totally lost." A good question; but the answer—offered without a shred of evidence—is rather less so: competition among *private corporations* ("Standard Oil, Deutsche Bank, . . . DeBeers Diamond Corporation") had become limitless.

As for World War II, Hobsbawm clearly blames Hitler for its outbreak, but makes only a passing reference to appeasement, and virtually none at all to the Nazi-Soviet pact or the war aims of the Nazi regime (or, for that matter, those "corporations"). To be sure, he has large themes to develop: the managerial and technological revolutions and the demographic catastrophes born of total war. But is a single sentence—to the effect that the Armenian genocide "was later followed by the better-known Nazi mass-killing of about five million Jews"—all one need say about the Holocaust? Likewise, Hobsbawm meditates at length about the origins of fascism without once considering the impact of the man Adolf Hitler on the Nazi seizure of power and subsequent acts; rather, he defines fascism as "a response to the danger, indeed the reality, of social revolution and working-class power in general, to the October revolution and Leninism in particular. . . ."

AND so we come to Hobsbawm's true project in this book, which is to reconstrue Leninism as a tragic mistake that nonetheless had many good consequences and, but for the frightened response to it on the part of the capitalist powers, could have had many more. Thus, the Bolsheviks knew that world revolution could only succeed if they captured Germany; the reason they failed was that World War I ended too soon. On the other hand, the Bolshevik regime did survive in Russia, thanks to the crusading discipline of the Communists (whom Hobsbawm likens to the early Christians and Muslims, and to medieval monastics), to the fact that only the Bolsheviks could hold Russia's empire together, and to their wisdom in promising land to the peasants. ("Red Terror," like the Nazi-Soviet pact, falls into the memory hole.)

Hobsbawm does make grudging reference to the human cost of Stalinist industrialization, though he cannot see any alternative to it. What is more important, Stalin's "achievements" impressed sympathetic foreign observers because "what they were trying to come to terms with was not the actual phenomenon of the USSR but the breakdown of their own economic system, the depth of the failure of Western capitalism." So all those who willfully lied, covered up, or chose not to see the truth about Stalin in the 30's are exonerated. Their blindness, like everything else, was capitalism's fault.

Above all, according to Hobsbawm, the mighty USSR forged by

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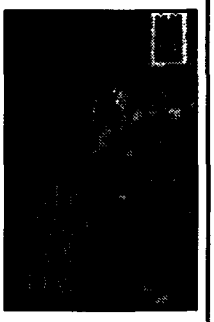

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Stalin was the anvil that cracked the Nazi hammer, and was thus—ironically—"the savior of liberal capitalism." Moreover, the capitalist/Communist alliance of the war years would have survived had Stalin only had his way! Hobsbawm's sole source for this shocker is an American Communist who quoted Stalin to the effect that "we will not raise the issue of socialism in such a form and manner as to endanger or weaken . . . unity." From this wisp, Hobsbawm concludes that Stalin had said "a permanent good-bye to world revolution" in favor of his "dream of postwar U.S.-Soviet partnership."

So, you see, the cold war ought not to have happened; but it did. What then made it so virulent? It was, predictably, the "emotionalism" of democratic electorates, which compelled American leaders to paint the conflict in apocalyptic shades. (So much for Stalin's militaristic postwar Five-Year Plan and Andrei Zhdanov's "two-camps" speech, not to mention Mao Zedong's and Khrushchev's wild threats and bluster.) Similarly, it was the American threat to intervene against Communism in Italy and France that obliged the USSR to "follow suit" by eliminating non-Communists from its satellite regimes. (So much for the real chronology, which was almost the reverse; nor will history record that the West blockaded *East* Berlin in 1948, or that the United Nations invaded *North* Korea in June 1950.) The fevered Americans, stalemated in Europe, then lashed out against the post-colonial wave of revolutions, and this "is what kept the third world a zone of war" and caused some twenty million deaths. (Chief among those war zones, says Hobsbawm, was the Middle East, where Israel was "the main force of disruption.")

AND where are we now? After the Americans launched the cold war, the capitalist world enjoyed a "Golden Age" of growth from 1945 to 1973—one of those phenomena for which Hobsbawm has "no really satisfactory explanations." The Soviet system, forged for the purpose of primitive industrialization, could not keep up. Yet even so, the Soviet bloc might have survived—it had the virtue, Hobsbawm says, of insulating its people from the social and cultural breakdowns of the West—if only Leonid Brezhnev, seduced by high, post-OPEC oil prices, had not made the USSR dependent on foreign exchange and thus allowed capitalism to drag the Soviet bloc down with it.

Now, however, the disappearance of the Soviet bogeyman has exposed the terminal diseases besetting the West. We are, as Hobsbawm sees it, in a hell of a mess, for the technological power and acidic individualism unleashed by capitalism now threaten to destroy the planet, while democracy has become a formula for gridlock. The good news, if there is any, is that all of this only confirms the essential rightness of Karl Marx. True, capitalism has not yet reached the necessary stage, nor spread sufficiently around the world, for the Marxian moment to arrive. But it will, or so Hobsbawm must hope.

FLANDERS and Swann, the wry British humorists of the early 60's, used to introduce their farrago thusly: "The purpose of satire, it has rightly been said, is to strip off the veneer of comforting illusion and cozy half-truth. And our job, as [we] see it, is to put it back again!" Putting back a veneer of comforting illusion and cozy half-truth is just what Eric Hobsbawm has done in this book. Too bad he is no comedian, and the 20th century no laughing matter. And too bad so many of his fellow historians, who should know better, are still ready to stand up and cheer.

Staying On

A CHOSEN FEW: THE RESURRECTION OF EUROPEAN JEWRY. By MARK KURLANSKY. *Addison-Wesley. 410 pp. $24.00.*

Reviewed by DAVID SINGER

BEFORE World War II, Europe was the cradle of Jewish life; today, Israel and the United States have become the two largest constellations in the Jewish universe. Yet despite the calamity of the Holocaust, some 1.8 million Jews continue to reside on the European continent. With its highly varied composition and even larger geographical stretch, postwar European Jewry remains a galaxy that richly deserves a close view. Mark Kurlansky, a journalist by trade, is to be commended for providing one, though regrettably his book only skims the surface of the subject, distorting some of its most important aspects and leaving others wholly unexplored.

A Chosen Few revolves around a single question Kurlansky posed to Jews whom he interviewed in his travels across Europe: "Why are you still here?" The question was not meant to imply skepticism but rather its opposite: a sense of wonder at the "strength and courage" of those who have chosen to "rebuild, remarry, and raise children" in the Holocaust's aftermath. Indeed, throughout this highly readable narrative, Kurlansky's deep sympathy shines forth for these "brave and tenacious people who . . . rebuilt their lives in the face of incomprehensible horror."

THE story that Kurlansky tells covers the period from 1945 to the present, and his geographical grasp takes in France, Belgium, Holland, Germany, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland. Britain has been purposely excluded because it was not devastated by the Holocaust; but why such major countries as Italy, Austria, and Greece are left out, not to mention the states that comprised the former Soviet Union, is never made clear. Still, despite the unexplained blank spots on his map, Kurlansky introduces us to a wide mix of characters.

He sought out, he tells us, "Jews of any kind—the more varied, the better. I spoke with tailors, bakers, and butchers. I did not want only prominent people." Accordingly, we meet here a hasidic Jew in Antwerp's diamond district who is largely oblivious to his Belgian surroundings but fully informed about the smallest happenings in ultra-Orthodox enclaves in Jerusa-

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lem and New York; a bakery owner in Paris who has watched from his store as the "Pletzl," the city's East European Jewish quarter, is gradually transformed into a tony neighborhood of gay bars and high-priced restaurants; a Yiddish theater director in Warsaw who must rely on non-Jewish actors to mouth the Yiddish words of the plays he puts on; and a Gentile professor who for decades was Prague's most knowledgeable authority on Jewish matters.

As THE abundance of colorful anecdotes makes clear, Kurlansky's overriding interest is in describing individual experience: "any Jew in Europe," he asserts, "is a representative of European Jewry." In accordance with this axiom, he spends little time attempting to draw conclusions about what he has learned from his interviews, or even explaining what the Jews he has spoken with do in fact represent. The only generalization Kurlansky comes close to offering is a non-generalization:

> I found no single answer to the question ["why are you still here?"]. People stayed because, in spite of what anti-Semitic countrymen might claim, they were indeed Poles or Frenchmen or even Germans. Some stayed because they did not want to see the history of their Jewish community come to an end. Some stayed to build a new society. Some never intended to stay but couldn't get their relatives to move. Some hated the thought of moving anywhere. Some always meant to move but could not get organized to leave, and some just got too involved with their careers.

Yet whatever their reasons for staying, Jews in Europe do, in Kurlansky's judgment, have a future there. As he puts it, thanks to a combination of Jewish stubbornness and random luck, "Hitler, at last, has been defeated."

While that statement may accurately reflect what his interviews yielded, Kurlansky's effort to explain "the resurrection of European Jewry" (as his subtitle has it) is inevitably crippled from the start. For the plain fact is that those who matter most in this "resurrection" are not the haphazardly selected, engaging personalities one encounters in *A Chosen Few*, but the committed activists who have been busy with the unglamorous work of reweaving the destroyed fabric of their communities. These individuals concern themselves with synagogue life, Jewish education, cultural expression, defense efforts, fund-raising activity, summer camps, establishing museums, and so forth—all of which are completely marginal to Kurlansky's discussion.

Kurlanksy's lack of proper focus is particularly evident in his discussion of postwar France. While he takes note of the arrival of 300,000 North African Jews in the late 1950's and early 1960's, one gains from *A Chosen Few* only the vaguest hint of the far-reaching transformation of French Jewish life wrought by these proud Sephardic immigrants. According to Dominique Schnapper, a leading authority on the subject, French Jews

> no longer follow the old policy of assimilation, nor do they limit their expression of Judaism only to the private and family sphere. Since the 1970's, new forms of Jewish identity have established themselves and found expression in a new religious and cultural life. Enrollment in Jewish primary and secondary schools and in university departments of Jewish studies is steadily increasing. . . . Over the past ten years there has been a startling return to Judaism as a religion. . . .

This process of "reverse acculturation," as the historian Howard Sachar has dubbed it, is not satisfactorily elucidated in *A Chosen Few*.

Again: although a considerable section of the book is devoted to Polish Jewry, Kurlansky rarely attends to what is important there. A handful of Jewish pioneers has been laboring in Poland to replant the seeds of the world that was stamped out. Kurlansky, however, though he makes passing reference to such initiatives, is more interested in the tribulations of assorted Jewish Communists whose only link to their people is the lash of anti-Semitism, and who represent,

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historically speaking, a Jewish dead end.

As the example of Poland illustrates, in ensuring a future, the efforts of all Jews do not count equally. At the end of the day, only those who are struggling quietly and tenaciously to form the basic structures of organized Jewish existence are likely to prove decisive in determining whether the "chosen few" can ever again become the many.

Poets at Prayer

ODD ANGLES OF HEAVEN: CONTEMPORARY POETRY BY PEOPLE OF FAITH. Edited by DAVID CRAIG and JANET MCCANN. *Harold Shaw. 311 pp. $14.99.*

Reviewed by J. BOTTUM

SOME contemporary writers of poetry take to religion, searching for the feelings that might release their fine command of words. And some religious people take to writing poetry, searching for the words that might express their fine religious feelings. Unfortunately, neither aspiration is a sufficient cause of good writing, and so religious poetry today has a tendency to magnify the difficulty under which nearly all contemporary poetry labors: the writers cannot feel, and the feelers cannot write.

All the more reason, then, to look forward to a work entitled *Odd Angles of Heaven: Contemporary Poetry by People of Faith.* For this could be the book that breaks the mold, showing us how a group of major poets can work, via religion, to revive the prospects of English poetry itself. Unfortunately again, it does not.

Odd Angles of Heaven is an easily read anthology, presenting one to four short poems, chiefly lyrical, by each of 70 poets. A reader not well acquainted with contemporary poetry may find the principle of selection disconcerting. With poets best known for secular verse, the editors evidently felt bound to choose the odd, and usually uncharacteristic, religious example. With those best known for religious verse, they evidently felt free to choose anything—even if not obviously religious. The anthology, which is alphabetically arranged, thus sets little-known religious poetry by such well-known writers as Wendell Berry, X. J. Kennedy, Denise Levertov, William Stafford, Richard Wilbur, and Charles Wright alongside the work of poets hardly known at all outside religious circles. And just to complete the oddity, it includes a handful of nonreligious poems for no apparent reason whatsoever.

All of the poets, or at least all of the poems, are American, and Christian of one stripe or another, and this is one way in which the book disappoints. The editors were certainly right to reject pseudo-religious New Age verse, and right again to accept verse from many different branches of American Christianity; but the absence of poets of other faiths skews the picture of American religion, and the absence of non-Americans, such as the increasingly important Irish poets and British writers like Geoffrey Hill (to my mind, the most distinguished contemporary religious poet), deprives the reader of some of the most important work being done today.

These considerations aside, however, it must also be said that within their chosen confines David Craig and Janet McCann have assembled a good sample of verse. Mostly in the unrhymed plain style, it is competent, assured, and careful to avoid the sentimentality, pietism, and cheap mysticism that tends to disfigure the genre. On the whole, the polished writers fare better here than the deep feelers (good ranting and raving require more space than an anthology can afford), and those poets well known for their skill with secular verse prove no less skillful at religious verse.

Thus, Richard Wilbur in "The Rule" asserts the need for formal ritual in religion:

> the rule has ruled . . . .
> Does that revolt you? If so, you are free
> To squat beneath the deadly manchineel,
> That tree of caustic drops and fierce aspersion,
> And fancy that you have escaped from mercy.
> Things must be done in one way or another.

In "The Waterbury Cross," X. J. Kennedy, another secular poet, recounts his difficulty understanding the death-bed return to Roman Catholicism of his fellow poet Wallace Stevens. And Wendell Berry has several nice Audenesque pieces, especially "The Way of Pain," in which he allows the pangs of child-rearing and the pangs of religious hope to illuminate each other:

> For parents, the only way
> is hard. We who give life
> give pain. There is no help. . . .
> I read of Abraham's sacrifice. . . .
> The beloved life was spared
> that time, but not the pain.
> It was the pain that was required.

Turning to poets known for their religious verse, I would especially praise Dana Gioia's rhymed gem, "Guide to the Other Gallery," the initial stanza of which reads:

> This is the hall of broken limbs
> Where splintered marble athletes lie
> Beside the arms of cherubim.
> Nothing is ever thrown away.

and David Citino's series of hilarious precepts in "Sister Mary Appassionata":

> Drowned bodies, drunkards, heroes, saviors
> surface always on the third day.
> Virgin wool cures the deepest ache or burn. . . .
> The holiest creatures are those that fly. . . .
> Those whose eyebrows meet can never be trusted.
> Women named Agnes always go mad.

ABOUT the large number of weak or otherwise defective poems in this anthology, by poets both religious and secular, the less said the better. Weak or strong, however, what is most distressing is the absence of *any* poems that make a religious world live on the page, the way, for example, Robert Lowell—whatever his personal faith may have been—made such a world live in "The Quaker Grave-

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yard in Nantucket" and "After the Surprising Conversions."

Is this the fault of the poets? Far too many of them, it should be noted, teach in college-writing programs, and as several critics have had occasion to observe in recent years (among them Joseph Epstein in "Who Killed Poetry?," COMMENTARY, August 1988), such poets seem to publish only for each other or to obtain tenure. This sterile meistersinger system, moreover, was established at the worst possible historical moment: at the height (or depth) of the rebellion against anything noble and exalted in verse. With its demand for a prosy style, the writing-degree system institutionalized a sort of self-conscious simplicity and studied primitivism—as though academics had developed elaborate rules to ensure that all trained artists would paint just like Grandma Moses.

The plain style is not in itself unpoetic; it can capture the perfect simplicity of a Japanese vase, and it can endow the rhythms of natural speech with force and feeling. But there are higher and lower ranges of human experience which it cannot articulate, and which it serves, in fact, to deny: the ranges of war and festival, damnation and salvation, evil and good. The formal adoption of this style by the poetry establishment has thus helped to impoverish poetic expression in general, and religious expression all the more so.

BUT the failure of religious poetry is not entirely the fault of the poets; indeed, to watch the struggles of the more innocent among them in this anthology is genuinely painful. Religious poetry cannot *make* readers believe; for its words and feelings to possess unity and force, it needs to rely on an already existing religious culture, and that culture has to be a shared one. Lacking such a shared religious culture—lacking today even its living memory—we have only competent writers in whose hands the plain style is incapable of drawing new feeling from the well of old religion, and religious people in whose hands the plain style is tragically or farcically incapable of expressing their obviously deep religious feeling.

Poetry itself is, in this sense, a casualty of the decay of religious culture in America and England. We do not all need to have the same religion to have good poetry in English, but we all need to have some sense of the enrichment of language that religious ritual bestows and the stability of language that religious faith preserves. "Religion is a spring," Henry Vaughan declared in the 17th century, "That from some secret, golden mine / Derives her birth, and thence doth bring / Cordials in every drop, and wine." There are certain things that can be done to help reestablish religious culture in America, and certain things that can be done only after its return. Good poetry, especially good religious poetry, is unfortunately one of the things that come after.

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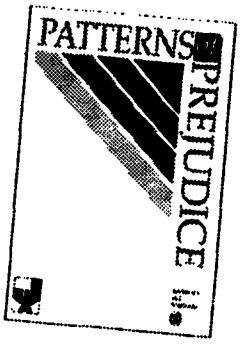

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Revisionism Revised

THE RISE OF NEOCONSERVATISM: INTELLECTUALS AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS, 1945-1994. By John Ehrman. *Yale. 241 pp. $27.50.*
COLD WAR ILLUSIONS: AMERICA, EUROPE, AND SOVIET POWER, 1969-1989. By Dana H. Allin. *St. Martin's. 267 pp. $39.95.*

Reviewed by ARCH PUDDINGTON

NOT so long ago, revisionist historians of the cold war were busy building a case for holding the United States principally responsible for igniting that conflict. The thesis never had any firm facts to undergird it, and it has now collapsed under the accumulating weight of revelations emanating from the archives of the Communist world. Cold-war revisionism, however, is not yet dead and buried—it is merely being revised.

With the *origins* of the Soviet-American confrontation no longer in serious dispute, revisionists have turned their focus to its end game. In brief, they accuse the Reagan administration of having needlessly fanned the embers of the conflict just as it was about to die out on its own. According to today's revisionists, the main culprits behind the allegedly anachronistic anti-Communism of the Reagan years were the neoconservatives.

OF THESE two books, John Ehrman's *The Rise of Neoconservatism* is a judiciously argued and decidedly *non*-revisionist account. I begin with it because, among his other virtues, Ehrman lays out most clearly the early history of the neoconservative movement.

As Ehrman reminds us, the term "neoconservative," at least as originally employed, was a pejorative, applied to those liberal anti-Communists who, by the early 1970's, found themselves outnumbered and alone, fighting within the Democratic party against its isolationist tilt in foreign affairs. While the members of this group—prominently including Jeane Kirkpatrick, Daniel P. Moynihan, and Norman Podhoretz—utterly failed in their struggle to halt the leftward slide of the Democratic party, they were nevertheless quite successful in suggesting to the American voter that there was an attractive alternative to McGovernite isolationism on the one hand, as well as to Nixonian realpolitik and détente on the other.

Neoconservatism's message emphasized the dangers posed to the United States and the West by an expansionist and militarized USSR; but neoconservatism was never limited to this point. At a time of elite disaffection in the aftermath of Watergate and Vietnam, it stressed as well the soundness and superiority of America's democratic political system. The allure of this message was vividly demonstrated by Moynihan when, during his brief stint as ambassador to the United Nations in 1975-76, he launched an outspoken counterattack against the anti-American, anti-democratic attitudes which dominated UN proceedings. Moynihan gained a wide public following and in short order was elected to the United States Senate precisely because he spoke unapologetically for America and its principles at a time when Western values were under relentless assault both from abroad and by many Left-leaning intellectuals at home.

Although Moynihan remained within the fold of the Democratic party, his forthright defense of the United States and its allies reverberated, as Ehrman shows, across party lines. The vigor with which Ronald Reagan trumpeted America's democratic virtues in the early 1980's and the often brutally frank rhetoric that he directed at the Kremlin were a direct echo of Moynihan's bluntness at the UN.

This echo was not created by accident; a fair number of Moynihan's former UN and Senate staff aides were recruited to formulate foreign policy in the Reagan administration. While intellectuals have often proved notoriously inept at wielding power, once in office neoconservatives like Kirkpatrick, Richard Perle, Elliott Abrams, and Carl Gershman proved to be talented bureaucratic infighters, contributing more than their share to the boldness and élan, and ultimately the success, of Reagan's foreign policy.

Though Ehrman's assessment of neoconservatism is by and large warm, he does offer one major qualification to his positive appraisal. In the mid-1980's, he contends, some neoconservatives grossly misread the nature and pace of developments in the USSR, and downplayed the significance of Mikhail Gorbachev's reforms.

Ehrman may have a point here, but it is only a partially persuasive one. Neoconservatives were hardly alone in failing to foresee the unforeseeable: that Gorbachev's reforms would end by shaking the foundations of the Communist system to the ground. Nor were neoconservatives wholly wrong when they expressed skepticism over whether the Soviet Union *could* be reformed. For one thing, it should be kept in mind that Gorbachev began his tenure in office by reintroducing such old-line Communist techniques as labor-discipline and anti-alcohol campaigns. Then, when he pushed ahead with genuine liberalization, the USSR did in fact prove recalcitrant to reform: it collapsed.

Whatever Ehrman's reservations on this score, in ably chronicling the instances in which neoconservatives helped to shape the course of American foreign policy, *The Rise of Neoconservatism* exemplifies intellectual history at its best. As the United States now grapples with the uncertainties of a chaotic world, it is useful to be so energetically reminded that the decisive final battle of the cold war was waged not with tanks and missiles but with typewriters and ideas.

LIKE Ehrman, Dana H. Allin, the author of *Cold War Illusions*, appreciates the immense influence of neoconservatives on American foreign policy—appreciates and deplores it. For unlike Ehrman, Allin can be numbered among the new revisionists, and he treats the targets of his analysis with a skepticism that shades into outright disdain.

ARCH PUDDINGTON *is a senior scholar at Freedom House in New York.*

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As Allin tells the story, far from winning the cold war, the Reagan administration actually prolonged it, greatly augmenting its costs and risks by means of confrontational rhetoric and a relentless military build-up. These hard-line policies were the work of the neoconservatives, whose aggressive polemics against détente had blinded them to the fact that by the time Ronald Reagan came into office in 1980, victory in the cold war was all but assured.

Indeed, Allin asserts, the Soviet Union had evolved into a declining status-quo power long before then. By the early 1970's, he writes, Europe, though still a divided continent, had settled into a stalemate that was highly advantageous to the West, with capitalist Western Europe wealthy and free and Communist Eastern Europe poor and oppressed. The Reagan administration inherited this exceptionally favorable situation but failed to recognize it, embarking instead on its reckless course of directly challenging Moscow in the economic, military, and ideological spheres.

ALLIN's argument in *Cold War Illusions* is constructed on one of the shakiest of intellectual foundations: hindsight. Yet even with this aid to historical vision, his gaze is surprisingly blurred. Thus, he claims that in the 1970's and early 80's it was perfectly obvious that the Soviet Union was an economically prostrate and politically divided power presiding over a tottering empire. But *no* respectable foreign-policy observer at that time—Left, Right, or Center—believed anything of the kind.

Advocates of détente in particular were certainly not arguing then that their preferred strategy of good will and patience would be rewarded by a Soviet collapse. Quite to the contrary, they predicated the need for such a policy on the great dangers that would arise if the United States dared to challenge the Soviet Union, a country so politically secure (in their view) that it simply could not be influenced by arms build-ups, economic sanctions, diplomatic isolation, human-rights campaigns, and the like. "There is no other choice" was a refrain endlessly repeated by the partisans of détente in those years; Richard Barnet, one of the "experts" on whom Allin relies, was busy explaining in the late 1970's that détente was necessary because of the "growing realization among capitalists and state socialists that neither system can survive in an economically divided world."

Allin is particularly critical of neoconservative warnings about the ease with which Western Europe might be intimidated by Soviet pressure, i.e., "Finlandized." Here again he attempts to enlist hindsight on his side—after all, he points out, the cold war did draw to a close in Europe with the Atlantic alliance intact. Yet fears over the coherence of NATO were not as ungrounded as Allin now blithely suggests. By the early 1980's, two of Europe's most influential opposition parties—West Germany's Social Democrats and Britain's Labor party—had embraced policies which extended beyond neutralism to verge on pacifism. If these parties had achieved political power, it is an open question whether their countries would have remained effective members of NATO.

Worries about developments in Western Europe were, in any case, a minor theme for the neoconservatives, who were mainly concerned about lack of will in the American foreign-policy elite. But this is a subject to which Allin devotes little attention. He mentions only in passing, for example, how close the Senate came to passing the Mansfield amendment, which would have forced a massive reduction in American troop strength in Europe, conceivably wrecking NATO and spelling an end to anything beyond hollow rhetorical support for containment.

Neoconservative fears for the future of the United States and the West were not woven out of whole cloth, nor was victory in the cold war automatically assured or preordained. This simple truth, which John Ehrman carefully and perceptively documents, cannot be undone by the rewritings of history now being undertaken by Dana Allin and his fellow revisionists.

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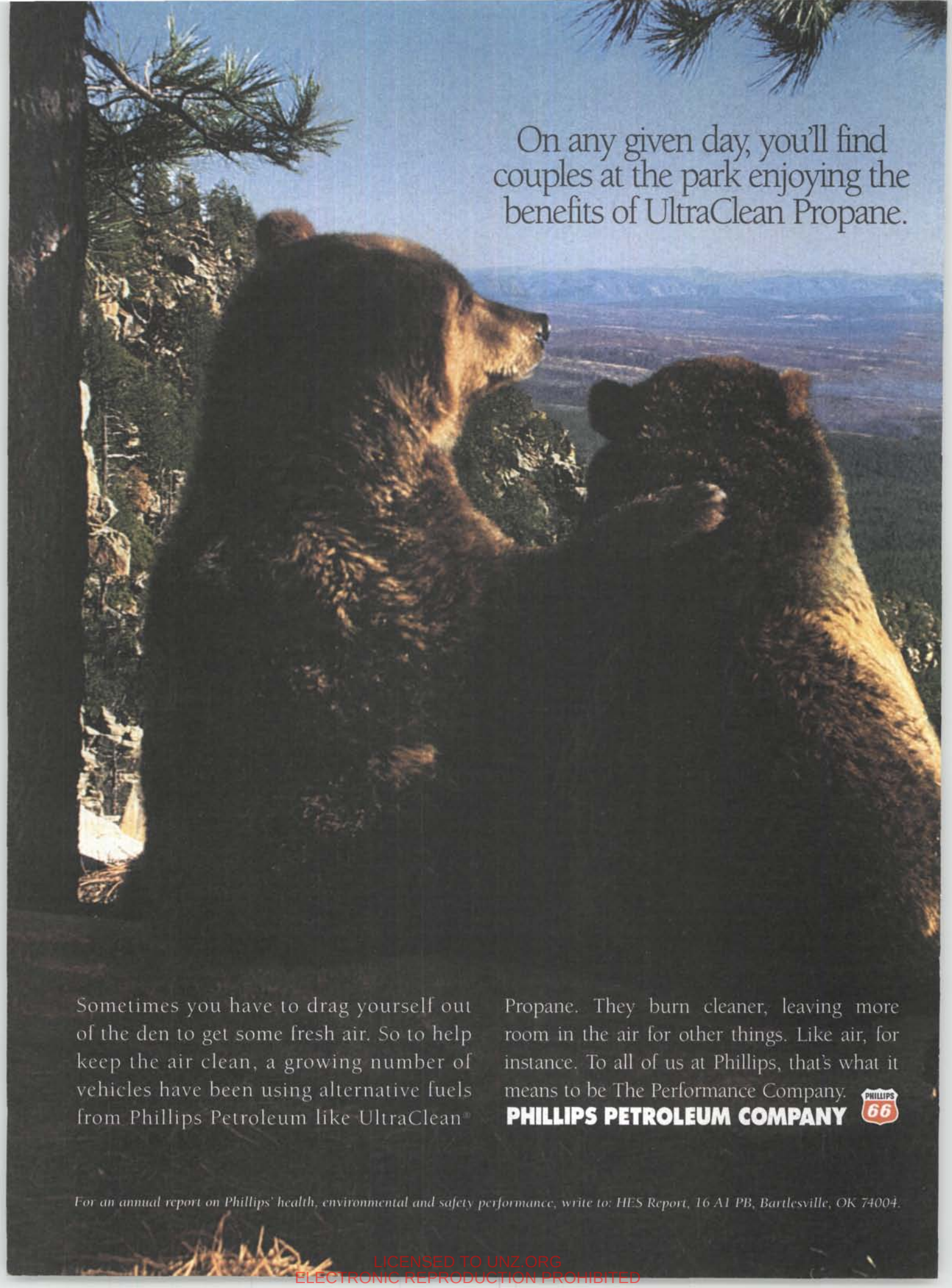

Sometimes you have to drag yourself out of the den to get some fresh air. So to help keep the air clean, a growing number of vehicles have been using alternative fuels from Phillips Petroleum like UltraClean® Propane. They burn cleaner, leaving more room in the air for other things. Like air, for instance. To all of us at Phillips, that's what it means to be The Performance Company.

PHILLIPS PETROLEUM COMPANY

For an annual report on Phillips' health, environmental and safety performance, write to: HES Report, 16 A1 PB, Bartlesville, OK 74004.

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